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[SHE'S A LADY.]

## THE LOST CORONET.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"One Sparkle of Gold," "Evelyn's Plot," &c. &c.

### CHAPTER XXVIII.

And when to gratify some wealthier wight  
She left to grieve the heart she had beguiled,  
The heart grew sick, and, suddenly at the sight,  
I wept for sorrow—should I not have smiled?

"Your noble suitor lies at the point of death  
under your roof!"

The words sounded as if spoken in a dream, or  
hissed by an echo in Estelle Da Vesci's ears.

She gazed wildly at Ruth Lovett's stern features  
as they bent over her couch, as if trying to assure  
herself that she was really listening to a serious, tor-  
tuous truth, or only bewildered by the miserable  
haunting of a troubled dream.

There was little room for hope, however, as she  
felt the touch of the long, thin fingers and heard once  
more the fearful words, repeated in a deeper if not a  
tuder tone.

"Estelle, are you sleeping—dreaming—that you do  
not hear me?" Ruth continued, angrily.

"Who—what do you mean?" replied the girl, fear-  
fully. "Who is dying? What has happened?"

"I thought I spoke plainly enough," returned Ruth,  
angrily. "A girl of birth and position ought to need  
no explanation as to her suitor's name; but, that you  
may have no excuse, I will announce it. Lord Hart-  
ford has been foully murdered—yes, for to all intents  
and purposes it is murder—and you are the cause."

"Tell me," gasped the girl, "who did it? Is he  
dead?"

"The hand that fired the deadly weapon was that  
of Quentin Oliphant; but in real truth the prompter  
was in your own treacherous breast, your vain folly,"  
returned Ruth, bitterly. "Had the Countess of Mont-  
Sorell remembered her duty and her plighted word  
one man would not have been sent to his account and  
another stained with a fearful crime. Child, do you  
not suppose vengeance will come for these things?"

There was little doubt that such vengeance was be-  
ginning already, if Estelle's strange, anguished eyes  
could speak of the misery within.

A black paleness spread over her features, and she  
trembled with an ague shiver that well nigh shook  
the couch with its tremor.

"How dare you?" she said. "It was not me. No,  
no, I defy you to say it. I never told him. It was  
himself."

Ruth's keen eyes glanced inquiringly at her.

There was something she did not comprehend in  
the words and look of her young lady, something that scarcely related to the occurrence which she had  
just announced to her.

"You mean that you did not bid Quentin Oliphant  
challenge Lord Hartford; is that it?" she asked,  
incredulously. "Perhaps no one could even have  
thought of it save yourself. It would be a rare thing  
for a noble countess under twenty years of age to ad-  
vise and arrange a murder. But this is idle talk.  
You must rise and act. You ought to stand at his  
bedside and witness his agony. Quick. Shall I help  
you? There needs scant ceremony in such a case.  
The skill of a French maid will not be wanted to  
adorn a deathbed."

She raised almost by force the trembling girl, and  
assisted her from the bed.

Estelle fancied that she looked suspiciously at the  
damp feet, which had not had time to recover from  
the wet chill of the morning's expedition, and each  
moment she dreaded that the tall-tale boots, which  
were carelessly pushed under the bed, might be  
dragged to light by her relentless assistant.

Perhaps the fear gave her strength and energy.

She hastily assumed the simple attire that sufficed  
for the occasion.

Her hair was wrapped round her head without far-  
ther coiffure, the quilted silk *peignoir* that served her  
for a breakfast robe when remaining in her own apart-  
ments was doffed, and with a fresh irrepressible  
trembling of every limb she prepared to follow Ruth.

"Yes, for the guilty," replied Ruth, angrily.  
"Come, and at once."

She dared not resist, and, half leaning on Ruth's  
arm, she traversed the long passages till they reached  
the door of the suite which was appropriated to  
bachelor guests.

"You need not fear meeting the unhappy fugitive,"  
whispered the woman. "He has fled, no one knows  
whither."

She opened the door with a noiselessness that in  
itself had something appalling in it, and passed in.

Estelle paused behind her for a brief second. She  
knew that any farther hesitation would be fatal to  
her own reputation in such circumstances, yet it was  
doubly frightful to her to encounter the wounded man  
at such a moment. Yes, more terrible than even Ruth  
supposed, and owing to a cause that no one, that is,  
none but one other person could divine.

But there was no escape, and like a stag at bay she  
nerved herself to meet the worst.

On, gently, slowly, but still onwards she passed,  
till she stood at the bedside of the sufferer. Then  
she grasped the pole of the couch for support in the  
spectacle that met her eyes.

The marquis lay there with a face that seemed  
literally drained of the colouring blood in its veins,  
so utterly blanched was it from its life hue.

Yet the crimson stains coloured the pillow, and the  
sheet that lay over him had the same terrible marks  
on its snowy whiteness.

His eyes were closed, but as if by instinct they  
opened when the rustle of her garments came on his  
ear.

"Estelle," was faintly murmured, "it was for you."

"All the better, the more womanly portion of  
Estelle Da Vesci's feelings was roused at the sight,  
the words."

She bent over him; her tears poured on his face;  
her lips touched his brow.

"Live—live for my sake," she murmured in his ear.  
He scarcely appeared to comprehend their meaning.  
Once more the lids drooped over the large orbs, and  
the mouth fell as if in death.

"Mercy, mercy!" shrieked the girl, in low, agonized cries. "Julian, Julian, come back, come back! It will kill me. I never dreamed of this."

"No; the consequences of our evil deeds are seldom expected by us," said Ruth, sternly. "But as yet it is not come—he has only fainted. Girl, I have seen death, and I cannot be deceived. He is still within hope."

Estelle could have knelt at the feet of her who pronounced these words. The load was greater than she could bear.

Then even at the moment there was a hurrying sound of steps approaching the chamber, and she started up as if to fly from the spot.

"Nay," said Ruth, calmly detaining her, "not so. You have nothing to fear, Estelle, from being found here. The Countess of Mont Sorrell may well stand by the couch of her guest, and Estelle De Vesci weep by her suitor. It is but the surgeons who have been summoned."

There was hope as well as fear in their advent, and she could scarcely command her energies sufficiently to meet them with the dignity that became the lady of that splendid mansion.

But happily for herself the natural bearing of her form and haughty air of her features gave her an appearance of pride and composure of which she could scarcely divest herself; and when she advanced to meet Mr. Cording and his companion all trace of anguish but the most natural agitation had disappeared from her features and her air.

"It is a terrible accident, Mr. Cording," she said, calmly. "Please tell me the truth when you have finished. Can I do anything?" she added, with a sort of mechanical composure.

"It is impossible to tell yet, Lady Mont Sorrell. It is no scene for you," said the surgeon, compassionately gazing at the youthful sufferer, then at the beautiful girl. "But before I leave your dwelling you shall know the truth."

Estelle bowed her head and walked to the door with the stately step and bearing that could not desert her even in that fatal hour.

She did not even glance at the dreaded and mysterious woman whose presence seemed ever to bode evil and reprobation; but swiftly as a fawn she passed on to her own apartments and sat down to think over the tragedy that had just occurred.

It might be that she discovered some unlooked-for blessing out of the evil that threatened her, or else the first shock was conquered by her strong, proud nature as she sat in that long reverie.

For some cause the agitation and the weakness passed away, and when she rang for Louise there remained little trace of the tempest that had swept over her whole soul.

"I only wish for a plain, becoming toilet to-day, Louise—something of neutral tints, or with a suspicion of black in their composition."

There needed no other hint for the astute Frenchwoman to achieve a perfect result. The exquisite gray that was the staple of the robe was relieved by the brilliant black and scarlet that formed its judicious adornment, and when the young countess emerged from her maid's hands the simple breakfast toilet in which she had been arrayed set off to the utmost her rare beauty.

"My lady is splendid even in the plainest dress," commented Louise. "I often think she ought not to be easily won, except by great deeds and sacrifices. It is no common thing to win a beautiful countess and heiress, very different to others, my lady."

It was a welcome homage, an agreeable salve to the conscience, even from that humble *soubrette*, and Lady Mont Sorrell's smile was unusually gracious as she received her handkerchief and gloves from the attendant.

"Perhaps your wedding will take place before mine, Louise," she replied, lightly; "and if I approve the bridegroom you will not lack my substantial marks of favour."

The girl courtesied low; but as her lady left the room an irrepressible smile came over her features.

"I believe it, I believe it," she muttered; "for Edgar has made sure of that, and I can keep the secret and back him up in his plans; and it will suit him to play off the foolish rivals one against the other, and get even more wealth than he dreamed of for my dowry. Let me see. There is time; I can begin the first act even now, and the sooner the better if it is to be effectual."

She rapidly arranged her lady's apartment, hid away the telltale evidences of the early walk, on which she darted with wonderful intuition, then left the room with a noiseless rapidity that had a catlike element in it.

A few minutes afterwards she might have been seen flying quickly over the garden paths and across the park, till she reached the gamekeeper's cottage. It was apparently empty, but, nothing daunted, the *soubrette* quickly applied a pass-key to the door lock,

and, entering the small dwelling, passed rapidly through the ground-floor rooms, then, touching a small spring in the floor that was scarcely indicated even by the tiny ring to the small brass plate that covered it, a trap-door flew open, and she descended a short flight of steps that led to an underground passage, little suspected even by the oldest inhabitant of those sylvan retreats, it having been probably made, as an escape in need, by one of the old Norman barons of the De Vesci race.

Louise passed on, without fear or hesitation, as if the spot was perfectly familiar to her, till she came to a sort of circular cave in the recess of the excavation where sat a man with bowed head on his knees, in an attitude that spoke of the most utter despondency and prostration.

The girl surveyed him for some moments with a half-curious sympathy, then, going up to him, touched gently the hand on which rested his half-concealed face.

#### CHAPTER XXXIX.

To you no soul should bear deceit,  
No stranger offer wrong;  
But friends in all the aged you'll meet,  
And lovers in the young.

"PLEASE, Miss Lovett, will you go to my lady directly? She is in a regular tantrum, and I cannot do anything to please her; so you'd better try," said Lady Alice Vernon's maid, spitefully, as she came into the schoolroom, where the young girl was half crouching on an ottoman, submitting to the tyranny of the little Julia—a spoiled, lively child of some seven or eight years of age.

"Will you remain here then with Miss Vernon?" said Pauline, quizzily. "At least, H. Lady Alice really wishes for me to go to her."

"Dear me! we're very proud all of a sudden," muttered the maid from between her teeth. Then aloud she said, more respectfully: "You can do as you like, of course, Miss Lovett. It's nothing to me so long as I've given my lady's orders. I'm sure I don't care whether you obey them or not. Perhaps I'd as soon you wouldn't."

Pauline did not even appear to notice the sneer, but, quietly walking to the mirror, gave one smoothing touch to her glittering hair, then left the apartment.

Manton coolly assumed her seat as the door closed behind her, and began to amuse herself with the pictures and trifles that had been the objects of amusement for the governess and her young pupil.

"Don't move those, Manteo; Miss Lovett will not like it. Besides, I don't care about looking at them with you; I want her," said little Julia, fretfully.

"Marry come up!" said the Abigail, toasting her head. "This is having upstairs in the house and taking away other persons' privileges and rights. But we'll see what will be the end of it, that's certain; and I'll know the reason why if she isn't exposed in her true light before long."

The exordium was lost on the little girl, who in all probability would have been perfectly in the dark as to its true meaning, and, as it happened, her attention was attracted by some glittering object on the floor, which had half hidden itself under the table. But Julia's keen eyes spied it out among the brilliant colours of the Brussels carpet.

"Oh, what a beautiful ring!" she exclaimed, seizing the bauble in her tiny hands. "I do think it is dear Pauline's. How sorry she would be if she had lost it."

Manton eagerly took it from little Julia's grasp and examined it curiously. Her experience as Abigail at once satisfied her that the stones were the most valuable diamonds, and set in a kind of monogram on a tablet of the most brilliant blue enamel.

"This is queer," she said to herself. "It ain't right for a penniless girl like that to have such a valuable jewel as this. Why, dear me, it's a man's ring too. It's enough to take away any one's character, that's certain; and I'll find out what it means, or my name's not Lizzie Manton."

"There, give it me, Manton. I want it to keep it safe for Miss Lovett," said little Julia, grasping it eagerly in her small hands.

Manton, however, did not at once attend to the peremptory demand. She fixed her eyes on the jewel as if counting its every stone, and reading the entwined monogram which was its device before she complied with the child's reiterated pleadings and consigned the valuable trinket to her care.

Meanwhile the unconscious Pauline had taken her way to Lady Alice's boudoir, without the slightest suspicion of the ill feeling and jealousy that were to work her such grievous evil, and quickly stood before the sofa of her patroness, awaiting her commands.

"Oh, you have come at last," said Lady Alice, rather impatiently. "I want you to amuse me a little, Pauline. I feel sadly weak and nervous to-day, and Manton's attempts at reading drive me frantic. Sit down and try whether your voice will expel the evil

spirit," she added, with a smile that pleaded her apology for any passing irritation.

Pauline took the book, and, sitting down on an ottoman near Lady Alice's sofa, began her task.

Her low, musical tones, perfect accent, and expressive elocution were indeed a rare gift, and as she went on the lady's attention became more riveted and a look of delighted surprise came over her face.

"Child, you must have had a superior education," she said, at last. "I observed that you could even pronounce the French and Italian quotations correctly. Do you speak the languages?"

Pauline flushed deeply. She knew that her very acquirements made her position more suspicious, yet she could not stain her lips with falsehood.

"I believe I can. I was, as your ladyship says, well taught," she said, softly.

"Can you sing—your voice sounds almost as if you might?" asked Lady Alice, with a mingling of suspicion and gratified amusement in her tone.

"That I'd swear she does," said a manly voice behind them.

Pauline sprang to her feet and Lady Alice started in some surprise.

"Otoh!" she exclaimed as a tall, fine-looking fellow of some twenty-eight or so advanced into the room. "What in the world do you mean by taking one by surprise like this? It's enough to bring on a heart complaint! Pray don't be so disagreeable again."

"My dear lady aunt, that is an impossibility. I mean, of course, not that I could not possibly obey your commands, but that I could possibly give any just cause of offence. Don't you know that I am privileged—especially in your house? The fact was, I was about being properly announced, but as I came into the ante-room I was arrested by such sweet sounds that I was literally unable to proceed further. May I not be introduced, miss gin?" he continued, glancing with irrepressible admiration at the lovely face of Pauline, which glowed like a rose cloud with confusion at the freedom.

"You can go, Pauline. I dare say Julia is waiting for you," said Lady Alice, with evident annoyance. "Otoh, will you not sit down? It worries me to see people standing about," she said, turning to the unshaded intruder.

But Otoh *Fititure* was by no means accustomed to obey anything but his own sweet will, and he sprang eagerly forward, instead of obeying Lady Alice's behest, to open the door for the beautiful creature who had so attracted him.

Pauline involuntarily accepted the courtesy with the graceful, dignified bow that had in other days been a second nature to her.

"Really, Otoh, you are very imprudent! Do you know that it is little Julia's nursery governess, a mere dependent, that you have been treating with that absurd respect? I was quite annoyed, more especially as she seemed to accept it with a most unbecoming ease," replied Lady Alice, surprised out of her usual gentle equanimity of manner.

"Extremely sorry, my dear aunt," returned Otoh, carelessly; "at the same time I really cannot confess myself in the wrong. Depend upon it, either you are completely mistaken or Dame Nature has committed one of the most egregious absurdities that ever came into her capricious head. If that girl is meant for a nursery governess, why, I decidedly object to her antipodes in rank. The bow she gave me would not have disgraced a Court drawing-room—so proudly graceful, so entirely accepting it as her right. No, no, depend upon it it is a *Cinderella* business with my little cousin's governess."

Perhaps had Lady Alice confessed the truth she might have agreed with her nephew's whimsical fancies, for she herself had been strangely perplexed with her young dependent's anomalous position and acquirements. But she was too thoroughly disturbed at the provoking encounter between such inflammable materials as her wayward heir's heart and the beautiful *façons* for either justice or prudence to prevail.

"Really, Otoh, I do think you ought to have a little more common sense by this time. You are no longer a boy, not a mere tyro in the world. But if you have not the ordinary discernment to know that a pretty girl, educated for a governess, may acquire all the outward refinements of a lady's manner I must insist on your respecting my wishes, and treating Miss Lovett, if you should ever see her again, with the suitable distance that her station and yours demand."

"Your commands are law, my fair aunt. I promise to carry them out to the very letter," returned Otoh, lifting Lady Alice's hand to his lips in playful deference; "and there is every possible reason to suppose I may have the opportunity to display my dexterity. My errand here to-day is to tell you I intend to avail myself of your invitation to Vernon Chase as soon as you go thither yourself."

Lady Alice scarcely betrayed as much pleasure as surprise at this announcement from her favourite nephew and presumed heir.

"Indeed, Otho, how is that?" she inquired, doubtfully. "Of course I am always delighted to have you with me, but I thought you were engaged to Lady Mout Sorell for the Christmas week."

"So I was; but, alas, even the plans of an heiress and a peeress in her own right are subject to *contretemps*," he replied, with a lightness that perhaps rather covered deeper feelings than he chose to betray. "The fact is," he resumed, more gravely, "that a very unfortunate business has happened at the Towers, though very likely it is exaggerated in its report. It is pretty certain that Lord Hartford and Quentin Oliphant have got into some row, and matters went so far that the one is now lying at the fair countess's house, with as many bullets in his bosom as ought to pierce in rebound the most flinty-hearted heiress in Christendom."

Lady Alice started painfully.

"A duel? How dreadful!" she asked, in a suppressed voice, that spoke of the horror the tidings excited.

"Yes; and of all the queer things connected with the fair Estelle this is the strangest. I daresay she thinks it a greater triumph than her coronet and estates into the bargain."

"Otho, I could not have believed it of—"

"Your charming sex, aunt. Well, I am sure you are perfectly an exception to the rule, but I assure you I don't know a girl who wouldn't give her ears—always provided she could supply them, *en suite* with her *coiffure*—to be the heroine of a duel with the heir of St Maur as its hero."

Lady Alice mused, scarcely heeding his light talk.

"It was a most remarkable story," she said, rather to herself than her companion. "I knew the late Lady Mout Sorell well, and I could never have believed she could be guilty of such a fraud. Yet I can recall some singular incidents connected with it. I never could understand the extreme privacy of the birth, where such an exciting interest surrounded it; and the whole family went abroad for some twelvemonth or more after the event. Yes, there is certainly some fatality about the De Vesci, if this young countess cannot even choose a husband without such scandal. Was it really an authorized engagement with Lord Hartford, Otho?"

"I only know that it was said so, and considered it so," returned the young man, carelessly. "I was an old chum, and, though I might not exactly carry out the ten commandments, he knew that I would never willingly betray the confidence of a friend; and he certainly confided in me the absolute fact of his engagement, and that he only waited for permission to announce and arrange for its ratification. Indeed, I was to be 'best man,' according to his gushing promises."

"Then of course it must have been a mere rumour that Lord Quentin was engaged to the unhappy impostor who had so long enjoyed usurped rights," resumed Lady Alice, continuing the thread of her own ideas.

"Really, my dear aunt, it is not possible for me to enter into such mysteries," exclaimed Otho, springing up. "I don't cross-examine my friends as to the number of their flirtations any more than I wish to confess mine. Any way, it was all fair if he was cheated out of one countess to pass over with the title deeds and diamonds to her successor. But I must be off. Let me see—what day do you go to your ancestral domain, *ma tante*? I'll escort you, if you will accept the dutiful service of your unworthy nephew."

He bent one knee on the ottoman before the lady's sofa so gracefully and winningly that her passing mood of suspicion and annoyance vanished, and she bent down and kissed his frank brow with maternal tenderness.

"I believe all is arranged for Tuesday, Otho," she said. "Helen and Miss Lovett will go this week, for I dislike moving about like the patriarchs of old; and of course it is awkward having such persons as those about you, and equally so to send Helen in another carriage. So they will get quite settled before I go down, and, if you will take charge of me, I shall be very much indebted to your gallantry."

Captain Fitzurse of course promised faithful performance of his proffered duty, and hastily retreated with a comically crestfallen expression.

"Too sharp for me by half," he muttered, sotto voce, as he sprang downstairs. "As if I could be such an idiot as to go with a dowager and lap-dog in a stuffy carriage. Shall get up a sore throat myself; only it might be dangerous, for after operations—Unlucky dog I am always."

But on this occasion the young officer's evil star was not in the ascendant.

Just as he slowly descended the short side staircase that led from Lady Alice's private apartments

to the principal corridor, a bounding step and joyous voice came rapidly towards him; and, in another instant, Julia had sprung into his arms.

"Oh, Cousin Otho, you surely were not going away without seeing me!" she exclaimed. "You must come for a minute, for I want to show you such a beautiful thing I have found; only be quick or Pauline will come, and I don't want her to see it."

"Why not, little one?" returned Otho, curiously, as he obeyed the impetuous little tyrant. "Why must not your governess see pretty things as well as myself?"

But Julia had by this time dragged him along the passage to the opposite flight, and entered her school room almost before he had a chance of considering the propriety of the proceeding. The room was empty, and with a mingled feeling of disappointment and relief he ascertained that the dangerous attraction, which Lady Alice so positively deprecated, was absent.

"Well, make haste, pet," he exclaimed. "I have not a moment to spare. What is it you have to exhibit?"

"Look! Is not this beautiful? It is Pauline's, and I would not let any one but you see it, Cousin Otho," she said, exhibiting the glittering jewel that had so seized on her childish fancy.

Captain Fitzurse took the ring in his hands, and gave a quick, admiring glance at its exceeding beauty of device, which, familiar as he was with such trinkets, appeared both rare and costly in no common degree.

"Where did you get it, Julia?" he said, half reprovingly. "You ought not to meddle with Miss Lovett's property."

But ere Julia could reply a quick rustling of female dress was heard, and Pauline Lovett hastily advanced towards them with a flushed cheek and flashing eyes that recalled for the moment the glowing beauty and high-bred dignity of the Countess of Mont Sorell.

"May I request you to restore my property, Captain Fitzurse?" she said, with tremulous eagerness, holding out her hand.

"It is so beautiful that you will, I hope, pardon my retaining it for a minute or so, Miss Lovett," returned Otho, with provoking coolness. "It is the penalty of rare loveliness to be subject to imperious examination," he added, with a glance that he intended should convey most flattering admiration.

"Excuse me, Captain Fitzurse. I can scarcely believe that you can seemingly intend any such insult," she said, coldly. "It is not my pleasure to expose the ring to any such ordeal, and it was an unfortunate accident that placed it in any one's keeping but my own. Be so kind as to restore it, and leave us."

"It is sadly tempting to hear you say please so prettily. It is enough to make a fellow prolong the enjoyment," he replied, provokingly. "Julia, what do you offer me when I have got anything of yours that you want particularly?"

"A kiss, Cousin Otho," was the innocent reply. "Do give that to Pauline, and I will give you one if you like."

"Do you think she would do the same?" suggested the young man, laughingly, holding the ring above Julia's reach. "Ask her, and then she shall have it."

But the next moment he repented having uttered the daring words.

Pauline's lovely face kindled with such a blaze of resentful scorn as he could scarcely have believed such exquisitely delicate features could have expressed. The outraged tears that sprang to her eyes were well nigh dried by the hot flame of her cheeks as they fell. Yet the very moisture in her beautiful eyes gave such softness to their brilliancy that they glistened like liquid fire, without the haughty hardness that such anger would have brought to Estelle De Vesci's dark orbs.

Otho Fitzurse thought at that moment he had never seen anything so lovely, so attractive, as that simply attired and unknown girl. Poor Pauline! Her very defiance of his lawless admiration only made her more dangerously beautiful in his eyes.

"Pardon me, Miss Lovett. It was but an idle jest to amuse my little cousin here," he said, more respectfully. "Allow me to place this unlucky jewel on your finger in token of your forgiveness."

But Pauline's bow of acknowledgment was so proudly cold, and her attitude so shrinkingly repellant, that he dared not insist on the request. So with a "discretion that was certainly the wisest part of valour" in the present instance, he gently placed the jewel in little Julia's hands.

"There, pet; give it to your friend, and try to make her pardon your teasing cousin—for your sake."

Then, kissing the little girl with more than ordinary tenderness, and bowing to Pauline with deferential and deprecating respect, he left the room.

Had he known the pangs he had added to that much-tried and pure spirit even his reckless selfish-

ness might have recoiled from the pursuance of his object.

### CHAPTER XXX.

There she sat all heavily,  
As she heard the night wind wail,  
Was it the wind through some hollow space  
Sent that deep and fearful moan?

The winter snows and bleak winds which gave an air of desolation even to the richly cultivated and splendid domain of the Towers were sweeping with yet more dismal effect on a lone cottage not many miles from that princely estate. In fact it might be said to belong to the De Vesci estates, since it stood on the edge of a small property, divided from the Towers only by a mile or two of intersecting land, and had always formed the dower house of the widowed matrons of the house of Mout Sorell.

Perhaps the division in question was not so galling to the members of that haughty race from that simple circumstance. But, in any case, the old yeoman owners of the land in question would not have sold their ancestral acres for ten times their value. That the Moat House would remain distinct and divided from the principal estate of the family for ever and aye, according to present appearances, was an accepted fact in the county and to the magnate whom it especially concerned.

The cottage in question contained but four rooms, and those extremely simple and rustic in their furniture, but yet there was an air of greater pretension in some of the articles in the apartment in which its tenant usually sat. The whole outward appearance of the building was one of more substantial erection and larger dimensions than the interior justified; but it had never been inhabited save by the one old woman who owned it, and for whom it had been built by the kindness of the De Vesci family, so that its interior arrangements were only known to herself, and perhaps one other, a sort of half-witted son of some thirty years of age, who lived with her as a rule, though his wandering mania frequently took him away for weeks at a time, when the fatigue and privations he voluntarily encountered could only have been endured by the remarkable physical strength that nature appeared to have given him as compensation for his mental deficiency and weakness.

On the dreary winter night of which we speak Dame Consell was sitting in the largest apartment of her little dwelling, musing, as it seemed, over the blazing, crackling fire or listening to the chill blast that whistled drearily over the moor, on the edge of which the cottage stood. She was a woman of some sixty or sixty-five years of age, but hale and vigorous in actual frame and constitution, though lined and furrowed as if both time and sorrows had planted their fangs in her brow and cheeks.

It might be that the watchful attitude in which she sat had a still deeper cause than that which might have been attributed to it, for, as a lull in the blast allowed fainter sounds to be heard, the dame suddenly started up with a look of startled anxiety.

A noise like a smothered groan came distinctly on her ear. It was repeated unmistakably more than once.

Dame Consell hastily opened a skillfully concealed trap-door which a short flight of steps enabled her to reach, and, closing it behind her, disappeared from that part of her small tenement where she had been sitting.

The room she entered was one made in the pointed roof without any ceiling to disguise the vaulted arch. The chief furniture it contained was a couch, a chair, a table on which stood some few articles that bore ghastly and ominous marks of the purpose to which the room was for the time devoted.

Mrs. Consell approached the bed, and leaned over its low pillow with a keen and not unkindly gaze at its tenant.

It was a handsome and youthful head that lay on the stained linen—at least it might be supposed to be so, as far as the pallid features and swathed head would allow an investigation of the lineaments. But, whatever else was doubtful about that unfortunate sufferer, there was no question that some terrible violence had been committed, either by accident or design, to have so disguised and marred his whole person.

His face was half concealed by the bandages which wrapped his head, and the arm that lay outside the bed clothes was tightly secured in a kind of amateur splint, as if some fracture had injured the limb; while the clothes over the whole frame were artificially raised as if to prevent their resting too heavily on the poor, mangled body.

Mrs. Consell listened to the repeated moans that escaped the unhappy sufferer, and touched the wrist of the uninjured arm with no unskillful fingers.

"Why did you not call me, Davie?" she said, turning to a spot where the powerful and ungainly form of her half-idiot son sat. "I bade you send for me if he came to himself."

"He didn't speak—he is not himself," was the sullen answer.

Mrs. Consell gave an impatient gesture. Then perhaps the remembrance of the folly and injustice of anger to the afflicted one checked her sharply, and she resumed, more gently:

"How long has he made this noise, Davie? Has he opened his eyes? Come, I know you will tell me, and take care of him," she added, coaxingly. "You know you saved his life, like a brave fellow that you are."

"Yes, and then you were angry. I hate him because he made you cross with me," replied the unfortunate child man, whose body and mind were so painfully in contrast.

"No, you must not, because I love you better now for being so brave. Only at first when you brought him I thought he was dead, and you might have been punished for moving him. It's all right now, my Davie, and you must help me to make him well."

A gentler look came over the idiot's harsh features as he listened, and by degrees he rose from his half-crouching attitude on the floor and came to his mother's side.

"Yes, I dug him out, I dug him out," he chuckled, gaudily. "And now we won't put him in the pit-hole again; will we, mother?"

"Hush!" said the woman, "hush! he is speaking. Listen."

She bent over the couch, but all she could gather was:

"Yes, yes, mine—mine. I'd die sooner. Here, here."

Mrs. Consell watched the feeble motion of the lips, and bent closely over him to catch the faint whisper, in order to make out even those few words. But she seemed instinctively to understand what he meant, and she replied, in clear, distinct, slow tones:

"Yes, I have it all safe. Be at rest."

He opened his eyes once more, with a wild, pleading look that gave for the moment a degree of animation to their dimness.

"Take care, take care," he whispered. "I won't die—no, no, not till—revenge."

"That is well," said Mrs. Consell, soothingly. "It is the best medicine. But you must wait, wait, and try and sleep. I will watch you, trust me."

There was a reassuring calm in the firm words that seemed to have its effect.

Tortured as he was with pain, racked in every limb, yet there was a supporting power in the doctrine he preached which, alas for human nature, might have failed where nobler motives were concerned.

"Yes, yes, I must live," he murmured. "You shall have gold, gold, if I do."

Dame Consell shook her head scornfully, but she did not attempt to contradict the sufferer. Her eyes turned to her own unfortunate offspring, who had again resumed his animal-like posture in a corner of the apartment.

"Better die sometimes," she murmured. "Yes, I fought and fought to keep that unhappy one in life when death had him in its grasp, and this is the end. I was punished in him for the sin I committed. They say it is redressed now—that grievous wrong; yet if that page tells true it may be but to bring fresh disgrace and wrong on a noble race. But the retribution came long since, when the father of those two sons spoke his cruel behest, and the one was childless and the other a reckless profligate. My poor, unhappy David—he whose affliction seemed the visitation for my grievous crime—may yet be the instrument for its redress. Yes, yes, this stranger speaks truth; he shall not die if there is virtue in Hester Consell's skill or power in watchful care."

(To be continued.)

MRS. ELIZABETH COOPER has just died at the village of Cumnor, near Oxford, at the advanced age of 102 years and 5 months, having been born on the 13th of December, 1769; and Mrs. Robert Hill has lately died at Oxford in her 95th year. Both ladies retained possession of their faculties to the last, Mrs. Hill being able to read and write without spectacles to the day of her death.

SCOTCH LOVE OF SERMONS.—Being all of us from Peeblesshire, there was much to speak of in common, though with no great cordiality of intercourse. In the evenings, when mason and carpenter lads dropped in, the conversation turned chiefly on sermons. Each visitor brought with him experiences as to how texts had been handled on the preceding Sunday; on which there ensued discussions singularly characteristic of a well-known phase in the Scotch mind. "Weel, Tammie," inquired the widow one evening, of Tammie Tod, a journeyman mason lately arrived from the country, "what was the doctor on last Sabbath afternoon?" "He was on the Song"—meaning the Song of Solomon. "Ah, the Song, that would be grand. He's a wonderfu' man, the doctor; and what

was his text?" "It was a real fine text," said Tammie, "the deepest ever I heard—'For my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night; fifth chapter, second verse, the second clause of the verse.'" "I ken that text weel," responded the widow. "I heard a capital discourse on it thirty years syne; but how did the doctor lay it out?" "He divided it into five heads, ending with an application, which it would be weel for us a' to tak' to heart." And so Tammie, who had a proficiency in dissecting and criticizing sermons, proceeded to describe with logical precision the manner in which his minister had handled the very intricate subject, his definition being listened to and commented on with extraordinary relish. Let no one hastily conclude that there was anything to ridicule in these searching though perhaps too speculative and familiar disquisitions, for apart from any religious consideration they bore evidence of that spirit of inquiry and love of reasoning on momentous topics which may be said to have made Scotland what it is. I may not have been the better, but was by no means the worse, for hearing Tammie Tod's sermon experiences in that little upper floor in the West Port, and have often compared what there came under my observation with the setting and want of all mental culture which unhappily mark certain departments of the population in different parts of the United Kingdom.—*Memoir of Robert Chambers.*

## SCIENCE.

A BERLIN lithographer has, it is said, after years of study, succeeded in inventing imitable paper money. The colour of the paper is the only secret on which the invention rests. The inventor says the colours cannot be chemically analysed; on applying the magnifying glass they can be distinguished from all other colours, and in their quality as colours they cannot be imitated by photography, nor by any other way.

RESTORING COLOUR TO MARBLE MANTLEPIECE.—Clean with diluted muriatic acid, or warm soap and vinegar; afterwards heat a gallon of water, in which dissolve one pound and a half of potash; add a pound of virgin wax, boiling the whole for half an hour, then suffer it to cool, when the wax will float on the surface. Put the wax into a mortar and triturate it with a marble pestle, adding soft water to it until it forms a soft paste, which, laid neatly on your marble mantelpiece, and rubbed, when dry, with a woollen rag, gives a good polish. This, too, is a capital furniture polish.

HOW TO REVIVE WILTED CUTTINGS.—It often happens when we have to bring cuttings of flowers, rosebuds, etc., a long distance in hot weather, that, in spite of their being carefully wrapped up in damp blotting-paper, they are completely withered by the time we get home. To put them in water is not enough. It is better to mix three or four drops of spirits of camphor with an ounce of water, and to keep their stems in this fluid for half a day or more, in a dark place, till they have quite recovered. This is the German method. In England manganese acid is used instead of spirits of camphor, and the stalks are cut a little before they are placed in it.

EGYPTIAN BRICKMAKING.—An Austrian savant is said to have discovered by means of a microscope, in a stone taken from the pyramid of Dashour, many interesting particulars connected with the life of the ancient Egyptians. The brick itself is made of mud of the Nile, chopped straw, and sand, thus confirming what the Bible and Herodotus have handed down to us as to the Egyptian method of brickmaking. Besides these materials, the microscope has brought other things to light—the débris of river shells, of fish, and of insects; seeds of wild and cultivated flowers, corn and barley, the field pea, and the common flax, cultivated probably both for food and textile purposes, and the radish, with many others known to science.

INJURIOUS EFFECTS OF METAL DUST.—The injurious effect of exposure to the dust of various manufacturing establishments has not unfrequently been dwelt upon with more or less force; but we are hardly prepared for the result of certain specific investigations on this subject. It has long been a disputed point whether the particles of iron, silicon, &c., merely lodge within the air-cells of the lungs, or penetrate through their walls into the tissue between them. But Professor Zeuner informs us that, on examining the lung of a woman who had been exposed to the dust of iron oxide, used in preparing books of gold-leaf, he found the powder in the tissue between the air-cells and in their walls, as well as in their cavities. From less than two ounces of this lung over twelve grains of iron oxide were obtained by chemical methods, so that, if equally distributed through both lungs, there must have been at least three-quarters of an ounce inhaled. In another case—that of a workman exposed to the dust of a

mixture used in preparing ultramarine substances—he found a quantity estimated at fully an ounce.

REMOVING PHOSPHORUS FROM IRON ORES.—According to one of the foreign scientific publications, Mr. Julius Jacobi, director of the smelting works at Kladno, Bohemia, has invented a process of effecting the removal (and subsequent utilization) of the troublesome phosphorus compounds from iron ores; its efficiency in practice remains still to be tested. The process consists in changing the insoluble basic phosphates, as they exist in the ores, into soluble acid phosphates, and the subsequent removal of the latter by leaching. The ores to be operated on are placed in an appropriate vessel, after being reduced to convenient lumps of moderate size, and a stream of water charged with sulphurous acid is allowed to run upon them, or a stream of the gaseous acid is forced through the mass, and cold water is at the same time turned upon it. After the greater part of the phosphates have passed into the solution the liquid is drawn off, and fresh water is passed through the mass to wash it thoroughly, this operation being continued as long as phosphoric acid can be detected in the wash water. If much phosphorus exists in the ores the operation with sulphurous acid must be repeated until a sufficient degree of purity is reached. The liquid containing the acid phosphates is heated to drive off the sulphurous acid, and the phosphates are again separated, partially by concentration, or by precipitation with lime. This being a valuable fertilizer is relied upon to cover a large portion of the expense of the operation.

SPONTANEOUS COMBUSTION.—An American scientific paper reports that, in March last, a Detroit druggist, assisted by two gentlemen, resolved to make a number of experiments with regard to spontaneous combustion. They first took a piece of cotton cloth, which had once formed part of a sheet, and had been used until quite threadbare, and smeared it with boiled linseed oil. An old chest was placed in the loft of a store-room in the rear of the drug store, a piece of zinc over it, another piece under it, and then the chest filled with paper and rags, and this particular piece of cloth placed in the centre. Although the room was not a light one, and the weather cold, in eight days there was such a small fire about the trunk, and the chances were so good for a conflagration within it, that the contents were emptied. An examination showed that the fibre of the oilcloth had untwisted and shrivelled up, and that the rag looked as if it had been held too near a hot blaze. In April, when the rays of the sun were stronger, a pair of painter's overalls, literally covered with paint and oil, were rolled up, a handful of pine-shavings placed inside, and these were placed next to the roof-boards of the loft. The experiment was not a week old when, during one warm afternoon, a smell of smoke alarmed a workman in the next room, and he found the overalls burning. During the hot weather of August a handful of old cotton rags, in which two matches were placed, but which were not smeared with oil or other matter, were shut up in a tin box, and hung up in the loft, a window allowing the afternoon sun to shine directly on the box for several hours. On the fourth day the box was taken down to see how the experiment was progressing, and the contents were found to consist of nothing but a puff of black cinders. The old chest was again filled this time with the contents of a ragbag, some portion of them being smeared with benzine. The trunk was placed in an outhouse. One day the family came home to find a few ashes marking the place where the trunk stood, while the bricks above and around were badly stained with smoke.

## TONGUES.

NOTHING but the proboscis of an elephant compares in muscular flexibility with the tongue. It varies in length and size in reptiles, birds, and mammalia, according to the peculiar organic circumstances of each.

A giraffe's tongue has the functions of a finger. It is hooked over a high branch, its strength being equal to break off large strong branches of trees, from which tender leaves are then stripped.

An ant-bear's tongue is long and round, like a whip-lash. The animal tears open dry clay walls of ant-hills, thrusts in his tongue, which sweeps round the apartments, and by its adhesive saliva brings out a yard of ants at a swoop. The mechanism by which it is protruded so far is both complicated and beautiful.

A dog's tongue in lapping water takes a form by a mere act of volition that cannot be imitated by an ingenious mechanician. The human tongue in the articulation of language surpasses in variety of motions the wildest imaginations of a poet. Even in swallowing food its office is so extraordinary that physiologists cannot explain the phenomena of deglutition without employing the aid of several sciences.



[THE FEMALE DETECTIVE.]

## BREAKING THE CHARM.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"Tempting Fortune," "Scarlet Berries," &amp;c., &amp;c.

## CHAPTER XXXVI.

Bravely bear your drooping heart,  
Though clouds may lower above;  
There is help in honest friendship,  
And joy in woman's love.

Anon.

WITHOUT ever having seriously considered whether there was any prospect of a favourable return, present or prospective, Philip Mallison had allowed his youthful affection to centre itself entirely upon Milly, whose lovely face had securely captured his untutored heart.

It was therefore with the utmost delight that he heard from the lips of the matron the name of the asylum in which Miss Haines had been confined by the malice and perfidious testimony of her uncle, Doctor Wadden.

No chivalrous knight of the olden time ever desired more ardently to break a lance on behalf of his darling love than did Philip to effect his darling's liberation.

She had behaved nobly to him in resigning his mother's fortune, which she might, as far as the law would have helped him, have enjoyed until the day of her death, and on that account alone she deserved that he should exert himself for her.

What if on resuming her position in society she should meet the duke again restored to health, a reconciliation should take place between them, and she should become Duchess of Lewes as the aged nobleman had promised her?

Philip sighed as such a contingency presented itself to his imagination, but reflected that he would have no right to interpose to prevent such a consummation. In whatever she did there was no doubt that Milly would study her happiness and inclination, and it was not for him to command her love.

With the modesty of a well-behaved, sensible, and innocent young man, Philip looked up to Milly as a sort of superior being, an earthly angel, whom it was no sin but a duty rather to worship, and he scarcely dared to hope that at any time she could consent to be his wife—and how much meaning is comprehended in the word.

His reverie was cut short by the resumption of the conversation between Mrs. Compton and the doctor, which had been momentarily broken off.

"When Miss Haines first came to the asylum, sir," continued the matron, "I did not know whether she was mad or not. Patients are so artful that we are

often taken in by them. I remember one pretty, fair-haired, baby-faced thing who didn't look as if she could say 'Bo' to a goose, she was quiet enough for a month, and then she dashed a fellow patient's brains out."

"You are satisfied now, I hope, that Miss Haines is perfectly sane?" remarked the doctor.

"Oh, yes; my mind is quite clear now. Though when she told me her dream, and about Lord Cardington and the Duke of Lewes, and asked me to come down here, my faith was a little shaken. However, I'm glad I've come now, for if there is any mischief going on I may under Providence be the humble means of preventing it coming to a fatal issue."

"Dream! what dream?" asked Doctor Kingsford.

"It's through the dream that I've come here—not that I'm much of a believer in that sort of thing, though I had an aunt who pretended to have the gift of second sight, and very wonderful things she told too."

"What did Miss Haines dream?" said Philip, impatiently, for he as well as the doctor was a much-interested auditor of Mrs. Compton's.

"She fancied that the duke called to her for help three nights running."

"A mystic number," said the doctor.

"So I said," replied Mrs. Compton, "and he complained that some one was tampering with his medicine."

"Very remarkable," observed Doctor Kingsford; "this dream, or vision, or whatever you like to call it, carries out our charge against Lord Cardington in a very extraordinary manner, Mr. Mallison."

"Does it not?" replied Philip. "I am satisfied in my own mind that foul play is going on, and that the duke will die unless some strong measures are taken to stay the murderous hand of Lord Cardington, who has so often offended against the law that he laughs at its penalties. If any question arose as to the duke's death he would go abroad and enjoy his wealth there."

"It is difficult to know how to act," exclaimed the doctor, meditatively. "You are turned out of the house, and my visits are brief; while I am with the duke I cannot see anything which is irregular. What we want is some silent witness, always at hand, solid, honest, incorruptible, whom neither gold nor threats will move."

"I hope you won't accuse me of self-praise, sir, if I say that I am such a person," exclaimed Mrs. Compton. "I've got a fortnight's holiday, and I did not come all this way without a plan."

"Well, Mrs. Compton," replied Doctor Kingsford, "woman's wit has often enlightened a subject when

every one else failed. Let us by all means have your views upon the important subject."

"I'm a nurse by profession, and can do my duty by night or day as well as any one in the kingdom. You are the physician in attendance upon the patient—what is easier than for you to send me up to the castle with a note to the housekeeper, saying that I am to be employed to assist the other nurse, as my experience and so on renders me of great service in a sick-room? I need not tell you how to write the letter, sir, I am merely giving you the vague outline or idea which you can fill up."

"I take your idea," answered the doctor, "and a very good one it is. I'll write the letter at once. You shall go up this afternoon and begin your watch to-night."

While the doctor was engaged in writing the note Philip approached Mrs. Compton's side and asked her a variety of questions about Milly.

Was she comfortable? did she pine for her liberty? had she ever mentioned the name of Philip or Mallison? what did she intend to do when she left the asylum, which she might expect to do when the lunacy commissioners saw her?

These and other queries showed Mrs. Compton the state of his mind, and she experienced a sort of innocent pleasure in inventing a fiction and replying that Miss Haines had frequently mentioned Mr. Mallison's name and spoken of him in terms of praise and affection.

This intelligence delighted Philip, who would have pestered her with another string of inquiries had not the doctor finished his letter, which he handed to the matron.

"Take your credentials," he exclaimed, "and now let me give you verbal instruction."

"You have only to order to be obeyed, sir," replied Mrs. Compton, civilly.

"Your experience with lunatics has no doubt made you—excuse the word—cunning."

"We are obliged to be artful with them, because they are so deceitful themselves."

"Be as watchful as you can. If you gain admittance to the castle, as I presume you will," continued the doctor, "the way in which you can best aid us is to detect Lord Cardington in the act of administering this slow poison. If you can get possession of the phial so much the better."

"I will try to do so, sir," answered Mrs. Compton. "But may I ask if his lordship is a man likely to be guilty of violence towards me? I am only a woman, and if he were to attack me in the dead of night what chance should I have?"

"A poor one, I fear. However, he is not likely to

go to such a length as that. You may depend on seeing me three times a day—morning, noon, and night, and if you act boldly you will be successful."

"I am inclined to hold the same opinion," said Philip; "his lordship is a coward at heart, and if he should find that he is discovered and his design frustrated he will fly from the castle. That is all we want, for his uncle would object to a prosecution on account of the family name. He knows that, and he trades upon the forbearance of his relative."

Mrs. Compton promised to do her best, and, without committing herself to any regular line of conduct, declared that she would be guided by circumstances, bearing always in view the main object, which was to unmask Lord Cardington and so fully lay bare his villainous designs as to make it antagonistic to his personal safety to remain any longer at the castle.

Taking leave of the doctor and his wife, she was guided by Philip to the entrance to the park and told to follow the avenue which led direct to the castle.

Thus instructed she could not go wrong, and advanced with a confident hope that she might be instrumental in saving his grace of Lewes from the tender mercies of his unnatural nephew.

#### CHAPTER XXXVII.

From beneath her eyebrows thin and white,  
Her two eyes flash like cannons bright.

Longfellow.

It will be remembered that during the scenes which had taken place between Lord Cardington and Philip Mallison the latter had mentioned that he discovered his information respecting his lordship's suspicious conduct from the nurse, and that Cardington had declared he would instantly discharge her for daring to talk about him.

When Philip was disposed of in the manner we have related his lordship proceeded to carry into execution his amiable purpose respecting the nurse.

Calling her out of the duke's room, he exclaimed, in a low voice which befit the occasion and the surroundings :

"You will please pack up your things and go."

"Go, my lord! Have I given you dissatisfaction?" the woman asked, in surprise.

"I am not here to bandy words with you," he answered. "All I can say is that a nurse of more experience is coming, as the patient's state does not give satisfaction. Proceed to the housekeeper's room and what is owing to you will be paid with any farther demand in reason you feel justified in making for so summary a dismissal."

"But, my lord, if you have any fault to find—"

"I have none."

"You can send me away if you like, but you can't prevent me speaking," exclaimed the nurse, with the stubbornness of a woman whose feelings are hurt at being discharged at a moment's notice without rhyme or reason, "and I will say if I die for it that if the duke, poor man, is no better it is more your fault than mine."

"Be off about your business," said Lord Cardington, whose face assumed a forbidding expression.

"The doctor's medicine should not be added to, and I have seen you put something to it. No wonder the poor man grows worse," continued the nurse.

"Will you go?" said his lordship, threateningly.

"Lay a hand on me, my lord—you do, that's what I want," the nurse said. "What I have asserted I will repeat, and I don't care who hears me."

"If you persist in this low and objectionable course of conduct," exclaimed his lordship, "I shall have no alternative but to call the servants and have you ejected. I tell you again that it is necessary to make a change. There is no charge against you. Take this five-pound note, and that in addition to your wages ought to console you for your discharge. Go. I have no wish to be hard with you. Go at once, and if you are a sensible woman you will hold your tongue."

The bank-note somewhat mollified the worthy woman's resentment, and, grumbling to herself, she went downstairs, where she had left her bonnet and shawl, which, together with a small basket of odds and ends, was all the property she had in the house with her.

Lord Cardington remained in the sick chamber for a couple of hours.

The duke was awake, but he did not talk. When he saw Lord Cardington he turned away from him with a look of aversion.

His appearance was that of one to whom some stupefying drug is administered. Occasionally his lips moved, and any one near him might have heard him utter the name of Milly.

At length he fell asleep, and, having assured himself of the fact, Cardington, whose brow was hot and fevered, muttered to himself:

"This cannot last much longer, or my chemist has

deceived me with respect to the strength of the drugs the rascal sells me. I have got rid of that babbling idiot of a nurse, and the insolent cur who dared to step between me and my heritage has been properly expelled from the house. I will go and inhale the air on the terrace and then I will send one of the servants upstairs to watch while I am absent."

When he reached the front door he stood still, and, bared-headed, allowed the gentle and refreshing breeze to play gratefully around his face.

His eyes wandered over such of the fair domain as lay before him—the magnificent park, with its ancient timber—the extensive lakes filled with fine fish, and covered with the rarer species of water fowl—the corn fields beyond, waving even then with the golden grain—and his eyes dilated as he thought that all this splendid property would soon be his.

"Mine, mine!" he ejaculated, in a voice of transport. "Never shall money-lending Jew lay his vile finger on the rent-roll. No, I have learnt experience during my youth if I have done nothing else. His grace cannot rally sufficiently to make a will, and it must be mine—mine—all mine!"

He had scarcely finished speaking when a woman, who had walked up the drive instead of going round to the yard and appearing at the back door, advanced to his lordship.

"Can I speak to Lord Cardington?" she exclaimed. "You should go round to the back, my good woman," he replied, annoyed at the interruption, "and be announced in the proper manner. This is irregular."

"Excuse me, sir, or my lord, if you are Lord Cardington, which I should say by your pretty looks you were," continued the new comer; "but I come from Doctor Kingsford, who says that another nurse ought to be in attendance on his grace. I am well certified, and have had great experience. Here is a letter from the doctor, who has my character as a professional nurse both in hospitals and asylums."

Lord Cardington took the letter of recommendation and read it.

It happened fortunately that she arrived at such a critical juncture, as a nurse was really required, and Cardington was not displeased at her coming.

"Very well," he said; "Doctor Kingsford's recommendation is of course sufficient; but mark one thing, you will have to leave at once if I should be subjected to the annoyance of prying and chattering."

"I never do one or the other, sir, my lord I mean. It's not part of my duty," answered Mrs. Compton, for it was she.

"I don't say you do, only if you interrupt me like this I shall feel inclined to accuse you of an inclination to chatter, which I suppose is a failing you have with the rest of your sex, as all women chatter, more or less, generally more."

Mrs. Compton did not reply.

"No, answer, eh? that's a favourable symptom," he said, with the nearest approach to a smile of which he was capable just then. "The last nurse I was compelled to discharge, not three hours ago, because she could not control her eyes, and allowed her imagination too free a run. Follow me, and I will conduct you to the sick-room. Anything you require you can ring for."

"Thank you, my lord; my wants are not many."

"Who said they were?" cried his lordship, who was in an irritable humour which could not brook interruption. "Be very careful in attending on my beloved uncle, who is my dearest relative on earth; and if anything happened to him I should be disconsolate for the rest of my life. Dear, kind, generous friend that he has ever been to me."

He turned round after affecting to wipe away an imaginary tear, and led the way to the duke's chamber.

Mrs. Compton followed him, delighted at the easy access she had gained to the castle, but feeling strongly inclined to allow the word "hypocrite" to escape her. Fortunately she controlled her inclination, though she saw through his lordship's attempt to make her believe in his affection for his uncle, which had as much existence in fact as his respect for moral principle or his regard for his own honour.

Having conducted her to the chamber, his lordship went away with a few additional words of advice and caution. He wished to stroll in the spacious grounds before dinner, and indulge his own thoughts, which were of a tumultuous character.

Mrs. Compton was no sooner alone than she examined the medicines, and, removing her bonnet and shawl, sat down to await a summons from the sick man.

The light came in dimly through the rich stained-glass windows, and played fantastically upon the rare and curiously carved oak furniture and wainscoting. Suddenly a faint voice said:

"A drink, give me a drink."

It was the duke, and Mrs. Compton, pouring out an effervescent draught into a glass, took it to him.

His grace drank it eagerly, and, scrutinizing her features, exclaimed:

"Yours is a new face; are you in his pay?"

"If you mean my Lord Cardington," replied Mrs. Compton, "your grace is mistaken. I am a new nurse, and I have been introduced here by the stratagem of your friends."

"Friends!" the duke, with a melancholy shake of the head; "I have none. They have been removed from me. Never was their number great. I have lived in solitude—too much so; my nephew is the bright upon me. I could try to live if my pretty Milly were here."

"She cannot come to your grace at present, though she has sent me."

"Will not come—will not, you mean," replied the duke. "I offended her pride by listening to what I now feel to be a falsehood. She is right to desert me; I deserve it. Where is Philip?"

"If you mean Mr. Mallison," answered Mrs. Compton, "he has been ejected from the castle by Lord Cardington for questioning his treatment of you, and is now at Doctor Kingsford's."

"Gone, all gone!" moaned the duke; "I am like the trapped bird in the net of the fowler. Heaven help me! Give me more drink, good woman; my throat is parched; I feel a burning within me."

Mrs. Compton complied with his wish, and he seemed to gain strength.

"Where is my little Milly?" he continued; "I would fain know what has become of her."

"She has been sent to a lunatic asylum by the arts of Lord Cardington, but tried friends will soon extricate her, when she will seek out your grace."

"She must make haste, then. I would see her before I die."

"Your grace will live long years yet, by the blessing of Heaven," replied Mrs. Compton, in a tone of encouragement.

"Not so, good woman," he answered. "You know not that evil schemes are in progress against me. I have seen my nephew in the watches of the night when he thought no eye was upon him—but not matter. I have driven the only true heart from me, and why should I wish to live? Let him work his will."

"Hush!" exclaimed Mrs. Compton, in a low voice; "he comes!"

Her experienced ear had heard Lord Cardington's step on the stairs, and she glided away from the bedside with the empty glass in her hand.

Lord Cardington entered the apartment and looked round him; the duke appeared to have fallen asleep again.

"Is his grace awake?" he asked.

"I believe not," replied Mrs. Compton; "he has made no sign."

"Wake him while I am here. I will mix his medicine, as I wish him to have it regularly. It is only by regularity and care that we can hope for his recovery."

"Certainly, my lord. When do you expect the doctor?"

"He will be here directly. Five o'clock. It is his time now, and he will ask if the medicine has been duly given."

Mrs. Compton nervously for an exciting scene.

Taking a medicine bottle from the table, on which the numerous phials stood, his lordship poured some of the contents into a glass.

He remarked as he did so:

"You will save me this trouble when accustomed to the place, nurse, but when I happen to be in the room at the proper time I like to administer the prescription to my loved uncle with my own hand."

"I am sure, my lord, that his grace is very fortunate in possessing so affectionate a nephew," replied Mrs. Compton.

All the time she was speaking she kept her eyes strictly fixed upon him.

She saw him take a small bottle out of his coat pocket and pour some light-coloured liquid into the glass.

"Have you roused his grace?" he asked.

"No, my lord," she replied; "give me the medicine, and I will do so."

Thrown off his guard for once, Lord Cardington handed her the glass, and with the utmost rapidity she placed it in an adjoining cupboard, which she quickly locked, putting the key in her pocket.

Lord Cardington stared at her in amazement.

"What is the meaning of this conduct?" he exclaimed.

"I am acting by the instructions of Doctor Kingsford," was the reply. "No more medicine is to be given to his grace until it has been subjected to analysis."

"Woman, are you mad? What would you imply?" he cried, fiercely.

"That you are an assassin, my lord. I have come to unmask you," replied Mrs. Compton, boldly.

In an instant his lordship recovered his composure. He was calm—terribly calm—but his face denoted stern and uncompromising determination.

"So," he exclaimed, "this is a new plot, and I have been nicely deceived; but you will find that I am not to be trifled with. Give me the key of that cupboard, my good woman, or you shall not leave this room alive."

Mrs. Compton trembled a little, but her long residence among lunatics had given her a strength of nerve and a courage which few women possess.

"Pardon me, my lord, but I neither can nor shall do anything of the sort," she answered, boldly.

"An excellent traitress," exclaimed his lordship, folding his arms, and adding, "Come, let us know the full extent of your treachery and baseness. Who sent you here? and what am I to suppose the extent of your plot?"

"I am not aware, my lord, that you have anything to fear, unless your conscience pricks you. There are certain laws which regulate men's conduct, and if one of these is infringed—"

"Make an end of such idle, canting rubbish," interrupted Cardington, growing furious once more. "I find I have been trapped, and I must have been an idiot not to see through the device. However, it is not too late to remedy the mischief. You declared yourself in your real character too soon. You have a clumsy way of carrying out the instructions which you doubtless received from your superiors. Come, give me the glass."

"I have already said that I cannot oblige you in this instance," she answered, firmly.

Again his lordship hesitated.

"Do you want money?" he asked. "Name your price. Money is generally the great end of everything and mainspring of all motives with people in your position."

"You can neither bribe nor threaten me into compliance with your wishes."

"It is not my custom to use violence to a woman," continued Lord Cardington, "but you provoke me too far. The key of the cupboard, or by Heaven I will tear it from you!"

Thoroughly alarmed at his manner, which grew momentarily more ferocious and truculent, Mrs. Compton thought it prudent to ring the bell violently.

"If you want the key you must make haste, my lord," she exclaimed, "for the servants will come trooping upstairs, thinking his grace's illness has taken an unfavourable turn, owing to my noisy summons."

Lord Cardington did not hesitate.

He flew at Mrs. Compton's throat, and, seizing her firmly, despite her struggles, bore her to the ground, she being unable to offer any effectual resistance as her strength was no match for his.

She grew gradually black in the face, as the pressure on her throat tightened, and a dizziness came over her, as if her senses were leaving her.

At this moment the door opened.

A man, who took in the state of affairs at a glance, rushed forward to the help of the prostrate woman.

A hand seized Lord Cardington by the collar of his coat and hurled him violently against the wall of the chamber, against which his head struck with a force that made him as confused and helpless as his intended victim, who was still panting dangerously on the floor.

The new comer, whose arrival had been so opportune, was Doctor Kingsford.

When the pressure was removed from Mrs. Compton's throat she began quickly to revive, and was placed in a chair by the doctor.

"Search him! search him!" was all she could now, pointing to Lord Cardington. "He is helpless now."

Acting upon this hint, Doctor Kingsford approached his lordship, who was so stunned and shaken as to be incapable of defending himself, and could only extend one arm as a feeble protest against the doctor's intentions.

From his waistcoat pocket protruded the neck of a bottle.

Doctor Kingsford no sooner saw it than he took hold of it.

A glance enabled him to see that it was labelled "Strong solution of arsenic."

"As I thought," he murmured; "all the symptoms are those of slow arsenical poisoning, but, having made this fortunate recovery, we may yet counteract the evil."

"Give me that bottle," faintly exclaimed Cardington, whose countenance assumed a pallid, death-like hue.

"No, my lord. Your reign here is over. If you are wise you will instantly make your escape," replied the doctor.

"What can you prove against me?"

"Everything. You are entirely in my power. I have no wish to harm you, and entertain too much re-

spect for the honour of an ancient house to wish to give rise to a vulgar judicial inquiry which may cost you your life. Be advised by me and depart at once, or I shall be reluctantly compelled to call in the officers of justice."

Doctor Kingsford spoke plainly but kindly, though he was burning with indignation at the cold-blooded villainy of Lord Cardington, who stood abashed and irresolute, not knowing how to act and wondering whether his ready wit would come to his aid to help him out of the dilemma in which he was placed.

An ominous voice seemed to whisper in his coward ear that the end of his villainous career was drawing near.

(To be continued.)

## ADA ARGYLE.

### CHAPTER XXV.

THE Indians looked really unhappy when their visitors told them that they could not themselves remain to the feast, but must re-embark at the latest within an hour or two, and when all importunities had failed to induce them to change their minds. Dertejap, looking suddenly very grave and threatening, said :

"Maybe we make you stay."

"No; I'm sure my brother will not do that," replied Argyle, taking the chief by the hand and smiling, but not taking a feeling of uneasiness.

"No, no," answered the other, his features quickly relaxing with a broad smile. "No, no; we say um only for scare."

Whereupon he shook hands very violently with Argyle and the senior Mr. Hare; and Kamsell and Bulbo, and a dozen others did the same without well knowing why.

But they begged that the sloop might come in. They wanted to see her. They wanted to go on board of her, and examine every part of her. Nothing could give them more delight. But, although their guests would gladly have gratified them in this respect, they were sure nothing would induce the timid captain to put himself or his vessel in the power of the red-men.

"Everything I've got in the world," he had said, "is in this here sloop, and I ain't going to risk it nor risk my life."

They explained this as well as they could to their red friends, and, after conferring together, resolved to take advantage of the present good nature of their hosts and ask to be sent off in a canoe to the sloop.

Dertejap and Kamsell and Bulbo might go with them, they said, if they would go unarmed, and then they could see everything.

This was gladly agreed to, and as soon as the two canoes came, which had been procured for another purpose, they prepared to start, no one being so anxious to get off as Philip, who could not believe that he was quite secure until he was out of the power of his late enemies.

The ardent spirits, too, constituted a new element of danger, for every one knows what excesses of folly and frenzy Indians have sometimes committed under its influence.

Mr. Argyle's conscience had troubled him not a little for including the pernicious "fire-water" among the presents, and he had only done so under the pressure of a great emergency.

However, the danger seemed now to be past, and the chief, having despatched another runner back to the village, remanded Argyle about his watch, which was in his possession, and said he had sent to his wigwam for it.

Had his white brother forgotten it? he asked.

No, his brother had not forgotten it, but had been expecting to have it offered to him.

Dertejap now looked rather sad, and said that he was very sorry, and was afraid he should make his brother very sorry, but he believed that the watch was quite dead. It had died very suddenly, he said, the night after his white brother went away, up to which time it had been very lively, and seemingly very well.

"Oh, that's nothing," replied Argyle, laughing. "I can soon bring it to life again. You'll see."

Dertejap was incredulous, and when the watch came, which had been carefully kept, and was quite unharmed, he and his dusky comrades watched with unbounded interest the process of winding, and thus seemingly putting new life into the inanimate object. They passed it round, listened to its ticking, and watched the fitting movements of the second hand with great delight, and the chief seemed much relieved to think he had not caused the death of the interesting little animal.

It was however returned to Argyle without any regret, or any apparent longing to retain it; but not so with that other pledge, which had a thousand-fold more value in their estimation—the mysterious corkscrew.

Dertejap produced this from his belt, carefully enveloped, and, after unwrapping it, he made a sig-

nal for Kamsell to come forward, and it soon became apparent that by a preconcerted plan the orator was to make a speech begging for the wonderful implement.

Kamsell complied, but he was very unsteady on his legs by this time; his voice was thick, he hiccupped, he leered, he gesticulated so earnestly that he threw himself down twice with the magic corkscrew in his hands—and his white auditors were quite unable to maintain a gravity fitting the occasion.

Dertejap interpreted this appeal, and his guests, after a pretended consultation on the momentous topic, accompanied by some grave shakings of the head, to add value to the gift, announced their decision to bestow the powerful "screw-corkscrew" upon their red brethren.

It was received with general rejoicings, it having, as the orator had stated, not only cured two bad cases of fever and ague, but one of toothache, and several other "bone pains" or rheumatism, besides securing a good deal of sound sleep to the centenarian, who had been permitted to keep it under his head at night.

Doubtless it was fully as useful in this last respect as the metallic rings which some intelligent white people wear on their wrists for a similar purpose.

This business being ended, and Philip continuing to urge their departure, the white party, after some leave-takings, embarked in a canoe with the three braves, and were soon alongside the sloop, where Captain Stowe and his crew of two, with their guns at their sides, received them very suspiciously, and would not permit the red men to come on board until after long explanations and ocular proof that they were unarmed.

Their visit was brief but satisfactory—especially to the chief and Bulbo, who saw and admired everything; but Kamsell, who still staggered badly, said he thought the big canoe was very unsteady and wanted something done to keep her from rolling and pitching so.

Before they went Mr. Argyle gave them some good advice about the strong waters and other matters which they promised to regard, and so they went their way, and the voyagers set sail for home.

"What was there in Mr. Argyle's conduct in all this that looked like insanity?" Frederick asked when this narrative was closed.

"Nothing in all this," Mr. Hare answered, "not a thing. It was, as his daughter had said, only on one subject that his ideas were out of joint, and that was his speculations.

"He talked of treating with the Indians for the island, which he thought he could buy of them for two hundred and fifty pounds' worth of merchandise, and then he was sure that the government would confirm his title and give him a patent.

"Then he was going to lay out a large city on it—establish a line of steamboats—attract immigrants to it—and make many thousands of pounds.

"Perhaps, after it was well started, he would sell out cheap to a joint-stock company, which he was going to form, and be contented with a million or two of profits, but he thought not."

"I have heard more crazy plans than this evolved by men who passed for sane," said Fred, laughing. "How did he look when he said this?"

"Very much excited and wild like. His eyes looked strange. Then he had other plans more ridiculous still, but I didn't encourage him to talk of them."

"Did he make any proposition to the Indians?"

"No; he said he would wait until the present pressure was over, as he needed every penny of his money for other purposes just now, and the red men were so ignorant that probably they would not take his promissory note."

"Probably not. That was a sensible conclusion, I am sure. Well, you left him in Brown Town, I suppose, safely restored to his daughter."

"Oh, yes; and they were expecting to start for home in a few days, in a steamer which was sure to stop there, they said, as signals would be out for it, and it always passed within sight of shore in pleasant weather."

"And she—Miss Argyle—was she well when you returned?" asked Fred.

"Oh, yes; well, but very anxious."

"Of course, of course, poor child," said old Mr. Rashleigh, who had been one of the listeners to this story. "I hope she got him home safely. You must certainly call and see. Fred, when you go down, and write me about it."

Mr. Hare had but little more to tell, and Philip, who had said but little, though he looked very happy now, conversed with Frederick and the family awhile, and then the visitors took their leave, intending to find Congo, who was still in the city, and whom they were both very desirous to see.

### CHAPTER XXVI.

MRS. RASHLEIGH would not hear of her son returning by the upper lakes after what had happened,

and so he crossed Lake Michigan to St. Joseph's, and took the old stage route across the State to Detroit and went thence by steamboat down Lake Erie.

On the day of his departure Shelburn called to see him, and, having informed him that Mr. Rolfe had paid up his whole debt and that he felt very rich and was going into a very profitable business, he approached another subject very coyly and quite from a distance.

"You and I," he said, "saw some pretty hard times together, Mr. Rashleigh, and—and there is a kind of tie between us growing out of those sad events."

"Yes, certainly, I feel it to be so I assure you," replied Fred, not seeing the drift of his friend's remarks.

"You are going far away from home now, all alone, and, though of course you will make your way, yet still something might happen, and if you would do me the favour—I—I—really resolved on it when we were bobbing about on the old settee together on the lake—I did indeed—and—"

"What in the world are you driving at, Shelburn?" asked Rashleigh, laughing. "Speak out, man; if I can do you any favour you may be sure I will."

"Will you really though?"

"Most certainly."

"Well, now you have promised you can't in honour recede. You see the long and short of it is—here is a hundred pounds I want you to take, for I don't need it, and you may—and—you can call it a loan if you choose, to be repaid when you are rich."

Fred, much moved, declined this kind offer, but when it was pressed still more earnestly upon him with a reminder that even his father, in his temporary embarrassment, as Shelburn chose to call it, might want a little aid, he hesitated.

"Somehow I shouldn't like to offer him money, though I am under many obligations to him," continued the generous man; "but if you choose to give him part or all of that it's all the same to me."

Fred happened to know that his father had with difficulty been able to spare him funds for his travelling expenses, and that he had calculated very closely the sum required for that purpose, and his strong desire to relieve in part his heavy cares induced him to yield to his friend's importunities.

He took the money and accepted it as a gift. He would not disingenuously seek to lessen the weight of the obligation by calling it a loan when there was so great an uncertainty of its ever being repaid—yet he secretly resolved that it should be repaid at some period of his life if he ever attained even a moderate degree of prosperity.

"Don't let it trouble you in the least," added Shelburn as he placed the roll of notes in his friend's hands, "not in the least, for whenever you are a richer man than I you may pay it back, but not before. So it's only a loan you see, and I am sure it's just the right thing to do, and my wife thinks so too. So good-bye, for I'm in a very great hurry. Business man now, you know."

By this transparent feint the liberal man escaped being thanked, and terminated Rashleigh's embarrassment, while he added by his delicacy to the weight of the favour he had conferred.

Fred immediately enclosed the notes in an envelope directed to his father, and added the following note :

"MY DEAR FATHER.—The enclosed money is a present from Mr. Shelburn forced upon me, but with permission, if I choose, to give it to you. I do so with the greatest pleasure, hoping it may relieve you of some of your present cares. I do not need a shilling of it, as the money you have given me will be amply sufficient for me. Your affectionate son FREDERICK.

"P. S.—Let nothing be said to Mr. Shelburn about it."

He gave the thick letter to his sister to be delivered immediately after his departure, but without informing her of its contents.

"What's this? What's this?" exclaimed the father when, having returned sadly from the boat whither he had accompanied his son, the little package was put into his hands. "This certainly is Fred's writing."

"Yes, pa; he left it for you. I am sure I do not know what is in it. I could not coax him to tell me, but you will, won't you?"

"I declare the silly boy has sent back part of the little money I gave him," replied Mr. Rashleigh, catching sight of some notes as he tore open the envelope. "Why, where could the boy have gotten it?"

"There is a letter, pa! Don't you see it?"

"So there is! Read it—read it, for I am sure I cannot."

Miss Rashleigh read the letter, and her father, after walking the room for some minutes in silence, turned to her with moist eyes and said :

"You see, my child, that even adversity has its uses, since but for it we might remain unacquainted with the best traits of our friends and those most dear to us."

### CHAPTER XXVII.

WHEN our hero arrived in Buffalo his first inquiries, after finding an hotel, were for Mr. Argyle, who he learned was at home, and in regard to whom he received a large amount of gratuitous information from a garrulous official in the house.

How he had just returned from a voyage in which he had been shipwrecked, how narrowly he had escaped, how his perils and sufferings had affected his mind, and how he was now full of a scheme for drawing off the water of Lake Erie—shutting out the supply and thus procuring some hundred millions of acres of first-rate land—all this was told him before he had fairly got his name registered on the books of the hotel.

Rashleigh arrayed himself for his visit to Ada with great care, for although they could never be anything more than friends to each other he felt a desire to appear to the best advantage before her.

He knew how to dress well; his apparel was fine and fashionable, and, as his friends and his mirror alike told him that his face and figure were both handsome, he thought them worthy of reasonable adornment.

He was not very vain, yet he was not free from vanity, but he certainly was not weak enough to think that his drawing-room suit was to gain for him the heart which he had failed to win in his traveller's garb.

He would have despised Ada if he had believed this, and he would have despised himself for making the attempt.

No; he had no hopes. He felt that he had no right to seek the love of an engaged lady, but still the desire to please her remained, and the wish to be favourably remembered by one so dear to him.

It would be a great alleviation to his grief if he could bring himself to believe that Miss Argyle had loved and married him if her hand had not been plighted before they met, for his amour propre had been wounded, and he felt—what all discarded lovers feel—a sense of humiliation.

How cordially he was received by the Argyles we need not say; but his visit was unexpected, and Ada blushed deeply on meeting him and introducing him to her mother and sister, who chanced to be in the drawing-room when he called.

The mother was a stout, aristocratic-looking old lady, seemed rather disposed to be condescending towards the visitor, but whose graciousness Fred quite overlooked in his delight at again seeing Ada.

The sister, who was apparently about twenty-five years old, was handsome and stylish, but bold and loud-voiced, took the lead in conversation, and she also tried to play the patron towards the young man who had befriended her dear sister and father.

Yet Ada was not over dear to Arabella, who thought Mr. Walsingham could have chosen more wisely, and she had for a long time believed that his visits to the family were intended for herself.

She had opened her eyes reluctantly to the true state of affairs, and had really believed that her younger sister had been artful and designing in gaining his affection, for how else could the distinguished suitor have made so great a mistake in his choice?

The case was very clear to Arabella, but it could not be remedied, and she had submitted without proclaiming her grievances, but not without venting a great deal of ill temper upon her sister in private.

She saw with woman's quick perception that Ada had also made another conquest in the handsome young man before her, and she believed that here, at least, if the stranger should prove worthy of her consideration, she might be permitted to attract without that dangerous competition which had before dashed her high hopes.

Rashleigh was much younger and handsomer than Walsingham, and, if he was not rich, she had been accustomed to consider her own father so very wealthy that she did not look upon money as indispensable in her suitor.

Talent, education, family, youth and youth's graces—how much better were these than hoarded gold, the deficiency of which to secure happiness she lost no opportunity of impressing upon Ada's mind.

Arabella was a woman of foresight and forecast, and, as Fred's appearance pleased her very much, she did her best to please him, without in the least suspecting how very much he was bored both by her and her lofty mother.

Being scarcely able to say anything to Ada, he resolved to shorten his unsatisfactory visit as much as possible, but he really wanted to see Mr. Argyle, for whom he had inquired, and of whom he now spoke again.

"Will your father be able to see me?" he asked of Ada, who looked at her mother and sister, upon which the two latter consulted together, and then the old lady spoke :

"Mr. Argyle keeps his room," she said; "but I fear he would be offended if we should not let him

know that you were here. So I will send for him Mr. Rashleigh; but you must be prepared for some little eccentricities of manner, as he has never fully recovered from the effects of his fatigue and exposure, and he is a little—what shall I say?"

"Flighty?" suggested Arabella.

"Yes—a very little flighty at times. He may show it to you and he may not—but you will please to take no notice of it if he does."

"Oh, certainly not!" exclaimed Fred. "His physicians say it is only a temporary aberration—"

"Very temporary," chimed in Arabella.

"And—and that it will pass away like a—"

"Like a summer cloud," added the echoing daughter, with her sweetest smile.

"I am very glad to hear it," said Fred, who seemed to be expected to say something.

But when Argyle came—Mrs. A. did not send for him, but went in person and conducted him into the drawing-room—his conduct seemed to Fred like that of a seriously deranged person.

He was boisterous in his greetings; he reintroduced his visitor to his wife and eldest daughter, and he went off into a rapid narration of the events in which Fred had figured, exaggerating some of them ludicrously and perpetually calling upon the young man and Ada to confirm his words.

"How is Lord Rashleigh?" he asked. "What did he say to my offered bargain? It would be half a million in his pocket eventually—perhaps more—but he doesn't mind that. He has a mint of money, that man has. I never knew anybody pay so much down. Never!"

Fred laughed, but before he could make any reply his question was off upon another subject, rattling away nearly unheeded.

"Is his father a nobleman?" Arabella asked of her sister in an undertone, but not so low that it did not reach Frederick's ears.

"No, I believe not," was the reply; "but he is an Englishman to whom some of his friends have given that title."

"But is he so very rich?"

"My father is insolvent," replied Rashleigh, bowing to Miss Argyle.

"Oh—I beg pardon. I—I ought not to have asked such a question; but I meant it only for Ada's ears. Father's stories are so strange."

"Strange—strange! I have seen strange things—my stories must be strange," replied Argyle, evidently not comprehending what his daughter was talking about. "How is Congo? How is that incomparable cook?—that black diamond—how is he? Where have you seen him? Haul him in!" Ha, ha, ha!"

Fred joined in the laugh, but it was not necessary to reply.

"I owe him a corkscrew—I do. I gave his away. You ought to have seen the Indians beg for it. Kaunsel—or Clamshell, as Congo called him—made a speech with many gestures—a speech that would have pleased Cicero, sir—you know Cicero, for you have just come from college."

Fred bowed.

"Why would it have pleased Cicero? Because it was all action, action, action! He was half-seas over, and his subject threw him, sir! We had to pick him up twice. We did indeed. Ha, ha—ho, ho!"

"Stop now, my dear, you are getting excited," said Mrs. Argyle, "and you know what your physicians say."

"Excited? Not at all, my dear. I am as calm as a clam at high water. Ha, ha! I shall have a fine country seat yet—house, stables, garden, park and all. But perhaps you haven't heard about my plan?"

"Never mind it now, my dear," said the wife.

"Why not now? Don't interrupt; it throws me back so! I always forget something when I am interrupted. What was I saying?"

He put his hand to his head and immediately resumed :

"Oh, yes; my plan. It's a glorious plan—very grand but very simple. I am memorizing government now concerning it, both our government and the Canadian. You see I have made up my mind that this Lake Erie of ours is quite superfluous—altogether superfluous."

"Yes."

"What do we want of it? There are four large lakes in the chain without it. Now, do you want to know how I am going to get rid of it?"

"Certainly, sir."

"Arabella, get me the map from the library. I'll show you what it can be done. You know that all the water from the upper lakes goes through that little outlet of Lake Huron which empties into Lake St. Clair. That little outlet, otherwise called the St. Clair River. You know that?"

"Yes."

"Well, there. There is the map. That little outlet of one lake is the inlet of the other, and through it comes all the water that forms Lake St.

Clair and Lake Erie, except a few small rivers which can be easily disposed of."

"Oh, yes."

"Well, see here. I lengthen this outlet. I turn it eastward. I extend it directly to Lake Ontario. And it is only a small river all the way; but it takes all the water. Where is Lake Erie now?"

"I see."

"The supply is cut off and it empties itself like a bottle turned upside down. Don't you see?"

Fred saw.

"But you will spoil Niagara Falls by this operation," he said.

"Very true; but what do I care for that? I am tired of Niagara Falls. I have heard of it all my lifetime, and it is high time there was an end to it. It's a great, pretentious humbug, roaring and pouring away there all day and all night, summer and winter, year in and year out, the same old story. We've had enough of it. The world has had enough of it."

"All right. I agree to its being taken down," said Fred, laughing; for he knew that people in his friend's state of mind should be humoured and not contradicted.

"I'll give fair notice. We shall be a year or two digging the canal or river, and everybody that wants to see Niagara Falls can come and see it before we shut up the show."

"Certainly."

"And as to those little rivers—the Thames and Sandusky, etc.—why we can turn their channels or we'll let them run on. They'll only form one narrow river where we have now a lake, and we have saved land enough for a State. Yes, sir, for a State as large as Massachusetts."

"That will be first-rate."

"I believe you. True that half of it will belong to Canada, but what of that? The two governments will reward me according to the vastness of the benefit I confer upon them. I should say they would vie with each other in heaping honours and rewards upon me."

It was difficult to stop the voluble man, but after several attempts Fred succeeded in switching him off this particular train of thought, and other subjects were discussed, the ladies being allowed to have a voice.

When Rashleigh rose to go and spoke of leaving town in the evening Mr. Argyle protested that he must not think of such a thing, but must stay and send them a visit of some weeks, and said he would send directly to his hotel for his baggage.

The old lady and Arabella joined in this invitation the former only ceremoniously, but the latter earnestly urging that it would gratify her father so much and might have a beneficial effect upon his health.

"So it would, Fred. It would quite cure me, I'm sure," said the father. "We'd talk over our adventures all day long."

Ada said nothing, but looked quite pleased at the idea, and for a moment the young man wavered, for the spell of that dear presence was upon him.

"Your father and I are such old friends," urged Argyle.

"I know it. I thank you very much, and should be most happy to stay, but I have engagements that positively forbid it. Indeed, I am already far behind my time, owing to our late accident."

Nothing could be said to this, as nobody knew the nature of Fred's business, but if Mr. Argyle had known it he would doubtless have told him that Walsingham would give him a far better place in his bank than the one he was going to accept in that of his uncle.

But Fred would have received no such favour from his successful rival, and he was sure it would be best for him to be far away from Ada; so he took leave of his friends, with much cordiality and with many smiles, but with a very heavy heart.

Arden as had been his love for Ada he was sure that it had gathered intensity in that brief interview, and he believed that nothing could ever lessen his fondness for her, or restore to him his lost tranquillity of mind.

If he could have borne away with him any evidence that his affection was even appreciated by the object of it, and that she parted with him with at least some degree of tender regret, it might have assuaged his grief or inspired him with fortitude to bear it.

There was a time when he was sure his devotion was acceptable to Ada, and when he even thought that her looks and actions and the tone of her voice indicated something like a reciprocation of his regard.

Had he been mistaken? or had she become sensible that she had given him undue encouragement, and sought to correct her error by a chilling reserve?

How he weighed and measured all her conduct in this last brief interview!

Surely she had blushed and been embarrassed when she spoke to him; surely she had looked pleased, but how very little she had said!

Yet, on the other hand, there had been little opportunity for her to speak, for others had engrossed the conversation.

But why had she not joined in the invitation to him to stay and make a visit? Ah, why?

#### CHAPTER XXVIII.

RASHLEIGH's call had been made in the afternoon, and after he returned to his hotel he found that he had a weary hour or more to wait for the starting of the coach.

Most of this interval had passed, and he was impatiently walking on the piazza of the inn, when he saw a well-dressed lad of about fifteen years approaching him, smiling, and extending one hand, while in the other he bore a small bouquet.

"I'm Tom Argyle," said the stranger, "and you are Mr. Rashleigh, I know. I wasn't at home when you called; but I wanted to see you, and sister said I had better come."

"I am very much obliged to her, I am sure, and to you, too," replied Fred, shaking hands very cordially with his visitor.

"I should have been here sooner, but I had to wait for this bouquet which she was making for you; and it is a very poor thing after all. She was in a hurry, you see."

A poor thing! Why it could not have been more beautiful if it had come from the Isles of Araby the Blest! A bouquet from Ada! His hand trembled as he received it, but how was his ecstasy increased to the very madness of joy when he saw, nestling in the midst of its japonicas, verbenas and roses, the little blue petals of a forget-me-not!

Ah, how had he wronged the dear girl in accusing her of a cold reserve at the very moment perhaps when she was preparing for him this precious gift with her regard!

The ardour of his feelings did not permit him to fear that his betrothed had overstepped the bounds of delicacy in sending him this speaking gift, or, if for a moment such a thought obtruded itself, he banished it as unjust.

These were the reflections of that moment of silence, in which the lover received the fragrant nosegay, and hesitated to press it to his longing lips in the presence of the messenger.

"She is indeed, very kind," he said. "I wish I could tell her how highly I prize it—for the giver's sake."

"Oh, I'll tell her," replied Tom; "but I say, I'm sorry you're going so soon. I have heard so much about you from sister and father that I feel as if I were well acquainted with you already. A terrible time you had—oh?"

"Yes, awful, indeed."

"And poor father! What do you think of him now? Did he seem to you very bad? Do you think he will ever get well?"

"Oh, yes; with care," replied Fred, who saw everything of rose-colour now. "Oh, he'll get well. It's so recent you know, and has been caused by his exposure and excitement."

"Well, I do not know about that. I think I saw something of it before he went away—a good while before; but I hope it will not last long."

"Oh, no, never fear. A few weeks of quiet and prudent medical treatment will bring him round; you'll see. Or even, if it should be thought best by his physicians, a short sojourn in a good asylum might be beneficial. He'd soon be out."

"Oh, we cannot bear to think of that, and mother says she never will consent to it."

"Does he go about quite unrestrained?"

"Yes—unrestrained certainly, but not unwatched. Never unwatched; but he would not bear restraint. It's a sad thing for all of us, Mr. Rashleigh. I was going from home the month after next, but now we cannot tell what we shall do. Of course I shall not go away and leave him like that."

Tom's mind ran on this subject, and Fred, who longed to say something of Ada, could not get the chance. He wanted to ask about Walsingham, and about the wedding, and to find out whether it was a fixed and settled thing, beyond all hope of change—yet he feared to know the truth. He had begun to think there might be some hope; a very slight chance would make him happy. Would Ada have sent him this significant present if she were sure she could never regard him as more than a friend? His mind was in a whirl of excitement, and he scarcely knew what he said or did.

In the midst of their conversation the coach drove to the door; the driver sounded a flourish upon his tin bugle, and a cry of "All ready" went forth. There was but a minute left for the important question, and Fred in desperation resolved to ask it, though he trembled for the answer.

"By the way," he said, with assumed coolness, "I hear that Ada is to be married. Is that so?"

"Oh, yes—yes—to Mr. Walsingham."

"When—when is it to be?"

"Some time next winter, I believe. The day isn't set, but we'll send you cards, you know. I'll see that you are not forgotten."

The lover's heart seemed turning into ice; but his eyes fell upon the bouquet in his hands and on the eloquent little forget-me-not, and he would not surrender all hope.

Surely—surely—there was some meaning in this mute messenger!

He took his seat in the coach; the driver sounded his last charge, and Tom reached through the window to bid his friend another good-bye.

"I say," he called out; "what was that I was to say to Arabella? I have forgotten after all."

"To Arabella!" exclaimed Fred, faintly.

"Yes—she sent you the bouquet, you know."

"Arabella? Did she send it?"

"Certainly! I thought I told you!"

"Stand away from the wheels there, young man!" shouted the driver.

As Tom leaped back the thong played around the coach's ears; the ready horses started and the coach moved on, bearing within it one heart more utterly miserable than any human being unopposed by great guilt ought ever to become.

The coach rumbled on—over the paved streets, and off them into the rough country roads; on—on—jolting along up on its rugged way, while strown along the ruts, and catching on the great wheels to be crushed by them, fell the torn leaves of sweet japonicas, verbenas and roses, and the little blue petals of a golden-eyed myosotis or "forget-me-not."

(To be continued.)

**A DESTRUCTIVE ICEBERG.**—A severe gale, on the 17th and 18th of April, drove the ice from the west shore of Lake Winnebago, and a storm on the 20th drove it back. The body of ice, three feet thick, 28 miles long, and 12 wide, moved with irresistible force to and upon the shore, to the great consternation of the inhabitants. On it pressed, crushing trees, fences, and buildings in its course. Trees two feet through were uprooted, and great rocks carried ten rods from the lake. The ice is piled in many places 40 to 1 high, and presents a beautiful spectacle, attracting visitors from all parts of the surrounding country.

**DURATION OF VITALITY IN GRAIN.**—We do not know of any distinct experiments on old and new grain, except it be the following single trial in pots:—Fresh seed wheat was sown in pots in autumn, 1 inch deep, and kept properly moist. In another pot, subjected to the same temperature, and the same degree of moisture, was sown wheat kept over one year. In other pots seed five years old was sown under similar circumstances. The first or fresh seed came up in eleven days, the weather being rather cool; the second seed, one year old, came up in thirteen days. The five-year seed in the other pots came up irregularly, the first in eighteen days, and afterwards for nearly a month. The grains of all were counted when placed in the earth, and the result was that all the fresh seed grew; all or nearly all the one year; but not one-half the five-year seed ever grew at all. From these limited experiments we may infer that fresh seed is always the best; if only a year old it may do well, although the plants will hardly have the vigour of the first; but seed several years old should be employed only for preserving or securing some desirable variety.

**THE LAW AMONG LAYMEN.**—It is well known that the benchers of one at least of the Inns of Court have been averse to the exactation of such as in examination as a condition of call to the bar, out of anxiety to encourage gentlemen of wealth and position to become members of the profession. This feeling is by no means unworthy of the rulers of the bar, and it is akin to the old idea that the Inns of Court should be regarded not only as schools for barristers but also for men whose fortune invited them to other and perhaps higher labours. In the present day it is not uncommon to find such men spending a year in the chambers of a practising barrister; and the knowledge thereto acquired must be of genuine value, whether the recipient thereof is satisfied with discharging the duties of a country gentleman and of a justice of the peace, or aspires to more influential exertions in Parliament. Even to a mere owner of landed estate it is of great importance that he should understand the leading principles of the law of real property, and be able to comprehend the nature of the estate of which he is seized and of the family settlements to which he becomes a party. Entertaining these opinions, we welcome heartily the hint thrown out by the Solicitor-General that the Chancellor of the Exchequer should remit the tax of 25, 2s. 6d. imposed on students admitted to an Inn of Court in any case where the student should declare that he did not intend to become a member of the profession. It may be said that the class of gentlemen which we have described do not trouble their heads about a sum of 25. But no one likes to pay taxes unnecessarily; and, in addition to that, we should be

glad to see the knowledge of law in its outlines and leading principles widely disseminated among the educated classes.

**INCREASE OF HEART-DISEASE.**—The tendency of modern investigation into the influence of civilization on longevity seems to show a twofold series of agencies at work. On the one hand, sanitary improvements and the lessened mortality from epidemics undoubtedly tend to diminish the average death-rates; but, on the other hand, there is practically much less improvement in total death-rates than might be expected if these ameliorating causes were not counterbalanced by the increasing fatality of other classes of disease, such as diseases of the brain and heart. It is important to recognize the precise facts. The excess may, probably, to some extent, be regarded as an unavoidable result of the great mental strain and hurried excitement of these times, in which steam and electricity mark time for us, in an overcrowded community, where competition is carried to the highest point, and where the struggle for existence, not to say for intellectual and other distinction, is carried on with sleepless and exhausting energy. But an evil recognized is sometimes half cured: and the intellectual classes, looking at figures such as those Dr. Quain has displayed at his interesting Lumleian Lectures at the College of Physicians on Diseases of the Walls of the Heart, may well consider the propriety of attending to the hygiene of their lives as well as of their houses, and to remember that to enjoy and benefit by even pure air, soil, and water, they must avoid disabling heart and brain by the incessant labours which too often make useful lives joyless, and embitter the harvesting of the crop which has been too diligently grown. These warning figures tell that, during the last 20 years, the total of deaths of males at all ages from heart-disease has increased in number from 5,746 in 1851 to 12,428 in 1870. The percentage of deaths from heart-disease for 1,000 of population living was 755 between the years 1851 and 1855; it has risen to 1,085 from 1866 to 1870. This increase, it must be observed too, has taken place wholly in connection with the working years of active social life. There is no change in the percentage of deaths from this cause in males under 25 years of age. Between 20 and 45 years of age it has risen from 553 to 709, and that almost exclusively in males, for there is almost no increase in the percentage of females dying from heart-disease during the 25 years of life from 21 to 45. These figures convey their own lesson, and warn us to take a little more care not to kill ourselves for the sake of living.

## MYSTERY OF THE HAUNTED GRANGE.

### CHAPTER L.

THE place to which he pointed was a sort of excavation, hollowed out of the high, clayey embankment, the entrance choked up with rubbish of every sort.

"Dig, Timmins," Inspector Burnham said, sententiously, laying down his box.

Timmins set to work. The dry rubbish came away easily enough. In five minutes the entrance was cleared.

Mr. Burnham stooped and looked in. The hollow place was dark and quite dry—an earthy odour alone was perceptible. It was tolerably large, not high enough for a man to stand upright in. It had evidently been made and used long ago for the purpose of holding tools.

"Fetch along the lantern, Timmins," the detective said. "I thought it might be dark," he added, addressing Mr. Lisle, "and came provided. If you please I'll trouble you to follow me in."

Timmins produced a small lantern from the box, lighted the candle, and handed it to his superior officer.

Inspector Burnham went in at once, holding the light before him.

Lisle followed.

The place was perfectly dry and of considerable extent.

Three steps from the entrance, and what they sought was found.

A human skull lay at the detective's feet, while scattered around were human bones, dry and fleshless, a mass of long, brown hair, and torn fragments of a woman's dress.

"Look!" said Inspector Burnham.

He picked up the skull with perfect coolness, and passed it to his companion.

But Robert Lisle by a motion declined taking it. Death, in his most horrible forms, had been familiar to him in his checkered career, soldiers he had seen mown down like corn before the sickle, but this was different.

A helpless woman murdered in cold blood is perhaps of all terrible and unnatural things the most terrible and unnatural. And this woman had been his beloved daughter's dearest friend.

"Timmins," Mr. Burnham said, setting down his light and getting on his knees, "fetch us the box."

Timmins groped his way in—the box was evidently brought for the purpose of removing the remains.

Lisle watched the detective and his assistant, wondering at their professional coolness. They gathered together everything—hair—bones—every shred of dress.

"Have we all?" asked the inspector, peering with his lantern over the ground.

"I think so. No, not all—what's this?"

It was a tiny silk bag with a string, as if it had been worn about the neck. Something like paper crackled within. Inspector Burnham opened the little bag and drew out a slip of paper. Was it a marriage certificate? No, it was an address, the address of Lieutenant Guy Earls-court, Piccadilly—the address Guy had turned back to give Alice on the night of her arrival at Gilbert's Gardens, when he had told her, if ever in trouble or need, to send to him and he would come to her.

She had kept it always in grateful remembrance—poor Alice—of his kind words and looks. And now it had come to bear its silent witness against him.

Nothing remained; the box and its ghastly contents were taken out by Timmins. The three men once more stood in the bright sunlight, and the secret of that dark excavation was its own no longer.

Timmins shouldered the box and started back for his cab, the others following, silent, gloomy. All save Inspector Burnham; his silence was the silence of deep thought, not gloom. Here was a splendid case cropping up, a case that would create an excitement throughout the length and breadth of England.

The Honourable Guy Earls-court, the brother of Lord Montalieu, the popular author, hunted down for murder, and by him, Inspector Burnham. Why, if he could track the dead clearly home to him his reputation for life would be made.

He linked his arm in Duke's, who would much rather have declined the honour, and drew him a little behind.

"I have another question to ask you, Mr. Mason. Are you aware by what name this Miss Warren went in her lodgings? An assumed name, I'll wager."

"It was an assumed name," answered Duke, "She was known as Mrs. Brown."

"How do you happen to be aware of it? Oh," he added, carelessly, "Mr. Earls-court, no doubt, informed Miss Lisle?"

"He did."

"Mrs. Brown." The note-book and pencil came out again. "Tottenham Court Road I think? You don't remember, or perhaps you never heard the name of the landlady? It's essential to find that woman, Mr. Mason."

"I have heard the name, but I forgot. It began with an H—Holmes, or Hayes—something of that kind."

"But Miss Lisle will remember, no doubt?"

"Miss Lisle is full of brain fever—she will remember nothing," Duke said, and relapsed into silence and gloom.

Mr. Burnham left Duke, and approached Saunders.

"Where shall we find you, my man, when we want you? You are the most important personage in the matter just now, and must give bonds by-and-bye, for your appearance when called upon. Do you return to Lincolnshire or remain in London?"

"I stay here," Saunders answered; "I ain't got any business in Lincolnshire, and I mean to stay ashore until I see the end of this 'ere matter. When you want me I'm on hand, and willing."

He gave an address. Mr. Burnham took it down. Then they re-entered their respective cabs and drove back to London.

It was very late when Mr. Lisle and Duke reached home. Olivia flew to her husband as she always did, whether his absence was long or short, forgetting, in the rapture of his return, everything else for the moment.

Paulina was much the same, no better, no worse; knowing no one, restless, parched with thirst, delirious always; calling, sleeping and waking, for "Alice, Alice!"

Inspector Burnham, of the Metropolitan Police, went to work at once, and with a will, working up this extraordinary case; extraordinary however only in that so distinguished a man as Guy Earls-court was the suspected criminal. He notified the coroner of the district, and placed the box and its dreadful contents under his charge. Then he set to work to find out the lodging-house in Tottenham Court Road to which Mr. Earls-court had brought Alice Warren.

The task was not difficult to a man of Mr. Burnham's skill and experience. Mrs. Howe still resided at the same place, and in the same house, and remembered, very readily, when Mr. Burnham asked the question about the "Mrs. Brown" who six years before had been her lodger.

"Which a nice young person, or one as gave less trouble, never set foot in this 'ouse since, or before," said Mrs. Howe; "and from the day she left to this minute I've never heard tale or tidings. And I do 'ope, sir, as 'ow the poor lady is well and 'appy, which she certingly was neither when she left here."

"Neither well nor happy? I'm sorry to hear that. Mr. Brown perhaps treated her unkindly?" said the inspector.

"Brown!" cried Mrs. Howe, in shrill scorn; "no more Brown than I'm a Dutchman! He was a miltingary swell, as I always said it from the first, and always shall, and whether she was his wife or not he knows best. She thought she was, poor dear, for a more bionocenter creater never came up from the country to go to a life of misery in London. He was a miltingary gent, and the very 'andsome I ever see, though his actions were the reverse of 'andsome. Not but that he paid up the bill without a word—harking for a receipt in that 'aughty way of his—but he treated her shameful, poor soul, and left her to worry herself to a shudder, as she was when took away."

"A military gent," repeated Mr. Burnham. "What was he like, Mrs. Howe?"

"Tall and 'andsome, carrying his head like that,"—and Mrs. Howe flung up her own by way of illustration—"dark complexion, dark-eyed, black hair, very glossy, curly, and black moustaches. I never had a good look at his face but once—the night he first brought her here; he always came muffled up afterwards, but I see him as plain now as I did that minute."

"Is this anything like him?" inquired Mr. Burnham, quietly.

He produced a photograph, and Mrs. Howe uttered a cry of recognition.

"That's him! that's him—Mrs. Brown's husband! That's the very gent I mean—I could tell that picture anywhere!"

Mr. Burnham replaced the photograph of Guy Earls-court in his pocket.

"Now, Mrs. Howe," he said, "I'll tell you who I am. I'm Inspector Burnham, of the detective force."

Mrs. Howe gave a gasp.

"Don't be afraid, I'll not do you any harm. This young woman you know as Mrs. Brown is missing—has been for some years back, and we want to find her, that's all. What you've got to do is to tell me everything you know from the hour Mrs. Brown entered your house until she left it."

He produced the note-book.

Mrs. Howe, in mortal terror of a detective, began at the beginning—the visit of Augustus Stedman to engage the rooms for a "party from the country, a runaway-match, going to be married the day after her arrival." "Which," said Mrs. Howe, "them were his own expressions."

"You don't know this young man's name?"

No, Mrs. Howe had never heard it, and never set eyes on him again, though he did call on the young lady next morning.

"Describe him."

This was not so easy as describing Guy. Mr. Earls-court's was a face which, once seen, was very easily remembered. Mrs. Howe had a good memory for faces, however, and hit off Mr. Stedman pretty well.

"We'll find him when we want him, I daresay," said the detective, writing rapidly. "Go ahead, Mrs. Howe."

The landlady described the arrival of Guy and Alice about midnight, and the appearance of both.

Mr. Burnham produced a second portrait, this time of Alice, procured from Speckhoven.

"Is this anything like her?"

"As like as like—that's Mrs. Brown, as I saw her first—so sweet and pretty a face as ever I set my eyes on. Not that her good looks lasted long, poor thing."

"What was the gentleman's manner?—affectionate, now, as a lover's might be?"

"Well—yes," replied the landlady, hesitating somewhat; "he seemed very careful of her and all that, and called her 'Alice,' and when he said goodbye, and left the room, he ran back to her again. Yes, he was affectionate, Mr. Burnham, sir."

"Did you hear her address him by his Christian name?"

The landlady shook her head.

"No, sir, she didn't in my hearing; I should have remembered it if she had. No, sir, she didn't. Then he went away, and she went up to bed. The next

afternoon, about six o'clock I think it was, a cab drove up, and a gentleman got out, and ran up the stairs. I went to the front window to watch them going off to be married, but I couldn't see his face. He had a wide black hat slouched down over his nose, and his coat-collar that turned up there was no getting a look at him. It was after dark before they came back. And when he came after that it was always in a sort of disguise. Most of the times I was busy in the kitchen, and didn't see him at all—when I did I couldn't get another look at his face, he generally came about dusk, too, and the passage was dark. No, sir, except the first night, I never got a look at Mrs. Brown's husband's face."

Mrs. Howe had very little more real information to give Mr. Burnham. Would she try and think—had not the tall, dark, military young gentleman called afterward unmuffled and undisguised?

Mrs. Howe shook her head. Not that she had ever seen; but now Mr. Burnham spoke of it she did remember Sarah Hann—the girl—telling her of a visitor Mrs. Brown had had in her absence, who called early, and on the first occasion brought a bouquet of roses. She had been very busy at the time, and paid but little attention. It was the very day before Mrs. Brown left. Later that same afternoon her husband had called. It might and it might not be him as had brought the roses. She herself had let him in. It was dark and rainy, she remembered, and he had a shawl wound about the lower part of his face. He and Mrs. Brown had quarrelled—they had heard her crying, and his voice raised as if in anger. He had paid the bill himself in the passage, and informed her that her lodger would leave next day. So she had, for the country somewhere, she had said Mrs. Howe on going.

"And if ever a poor soul looked heartbroken," the landlady pathetically concluded, "it was Mrs. Brown as she got into the cab and drove away. From that day in this I've never seen eyes—an or heart tell of her, but Sarah Hann, she told me yesterday, when I came home from market, how the tall, dark gent had been back again, hankin' for Mrs. Brown, and seemed upset like when told she was gone. Which," concluded the landlady, "was like his 'earliest tricks to deceive people and make them think as 'ow he wasn't the party as took her away himself."

Mr. Burnham inquired for "Sarah Hann." Mrs. Howe shook her head in a melancholy way. "Sarah Hann" had been dead and gone these two years of a decline. She had no more to tell. To what she had told she was ready to take her affidavits in any court in London.

"I'm very much obliged to you, Mrs. Howe," Inspector Burnham said, rising to depart, "for the pleasant manner in which you have given your information. If we can only discover now whereabouts Mr. Brown took his wife when she left Gilbert's Gardens I think we shall have a very pretty little case worked up. Good-day to you, ma'am."

Two days later, and in his studio, with the slanting rays of the July sun streaming upon the canvas, an old friend of ours stands busily painting. It is Allan Fane, the artist, whom, in the press of others' affairs, we have quite lost sight of lately. The studio is a very small, very luxurious little room, sacred to the artist himself, his most cherished pictures, and most intimate friends. There is a larger outer studio, where gentlemen congregate to smoke and talk, long-haired gentlemen mostly, who didn't patronize barbers—the Brotherhood of the Brush.

The years that have been so fraught with events for others have not passed without change over the head of Allan Fane. He stands here to-day with the yellow sunshine on his face, greatly changed, greatly improved from the effeminate, weakly, indolent, and selfish young man who eight years ago fell in love with and deserted little Polly Mason. The fair, somewhat womanish beauty of his face remains, but his long, golden beard, and the firmer curve of the lips, the grayer light of the eyes, tell now of strength, and power—ay, genius within. He is a celebrated man—he has won for himself fame and wealth, and the Bond Street tailor has cause at last to be proud of his son—a son who has sense enough to be ashamed of his humble origin no more.

A month after that October day on which he had met Paulina down in Speckhaven, after her return from France, his wife had died abroad. Her fortune had gone with her—that fortune for which he had so weakly sold himself; and once more he was free. He tried, manfully enough, to repress the feeling of relief and gladness that would arise—his wedded life had been unspeakably bitter, and eight months after their union they had parted by mutual consent—and he was free. As a necessary consequence his thoughts reverted to Paulina Lisle.

He went back to his brush and easel, and worked as he had never worked in his life before. The

picture was his long-dreamed-of, long-talked-of—"Rosamond and Eleanor"; and he painted his Rosamond from memory. All that winter he spent at Montalieu Priory over this one painting, and in the spring it went to the exhibition. On the chances of that picture achieving popularity his whole future hung—if it proved a failure his ruin would be complete. The picture was a great, a wonderful success—crowds flocked daily to see it, the newspapers praised and abused it without bounds—all London talked of it, a royal duke bought it at a fabulous price—orders rushed in upon him, and the artist's fortune was made. The world had not seen Paulina Lisle then, but a little later and people began to talk of the marvellous resemblance between Sir Vane Charteris's ward and the Fair Rosamond, and to discover that Miss Lisle must have sat for the original.

The picture was a striking one.

You saw a bleak stone hall, a red, rising moon through its one wide-open casement, rending its way up through piles of jagged black clouds. Queen Eleanor stood, a wretched, murderous woman, robed in heavy purple draperies, with bent, black brows, and eyes of dusky fire, proffering the bowl and dagger. Rosamond stood with the red light of the rising moon upon her fair face and flowing golden hair—a form slender and girlish, drawn up to its fullest height—the face white as death, the blue eyes flashing as only blue eyes can dash, the whole fearless face full of pride and defiant scorn.

So, surely, never looked the Fair Rosamond confronted by the king's jealous wife, but so Allan Fane had chosen to paint her. The face shone out so vividly, so startlingly life-like from the canvas that you seemed to hear the scornful words of defiance with which she braved the infuriate queen. Had Paulina Lisle ever really looked like that, people wondered? No; but in the twilight of a summer day Polly Mason had, as she hung his ring at Allan Fane's foot and stood before him in her now-found womanhood, scorning him.

While he remained Allan Fane would never forget how she looked, how she spoke then.

The picture was a success, and his fortune made.

He did not go into society that year, he heard in silence of Paulina's beauty and her triumphs; and the second season he met her. The old love, stronger than ever, filled his heart—he was famous now, and rapidly acquiring wealth, and he laid his laurel crown very humbly at her feet. He loved her devotedly—with a love that knew no change—would she be his wife? Her answer had been a refusal—a refusal that crushed out every atom of hope.

"The time for all that is past, Mr. Fane," she said, quietly, "I could not care for you now if I tried. Will you let me be your friend? Your wife I never can be. It is too late."

Too late! The old dreary refrain. Once her love had been within his grasp, and he had turned away from the gift, and now it was too late! He accepted his fate with a brave patience that made her like him as nothing else could have done, and they had been "friends," as she wished it, since.

There are not many men who will remain the faithful friend of the woman who refuses them, but Allan Fane was one. Wisdom and generosity were coming to him with years and suffering.

He stands this July afternoon painting busily. He is not alone. On a Turkish divan, smoking a long twisted pipe, lies Guy Earls court, stretched at full length. It is the last day of his stay in England—by the latest train he departs for Liverpool, to sail to-morrow for New York, and the last hour he is spending with his friend. A greyhound lies at his feet, and looks up into his face with darkly loving eyes as Guy pulls his long ears through his fingers.

There is silence in the little room—the artist works industriously, and Guy smokes and watches with dreary eyes a picture hanging opposite. It is the fair head and graceful throat of a girl in her first youth—the lips wear a saucy smile, the sapphire eyes sparkle with laughing light and follow you wherever you go. The picture is richly framed, and never leaves that spot—it is the portrait of "Polly Mason."

"What do you think of it, Guy?" the artist says, at length catching the glance. "It is like her, I think; as—as we knew her first."

It was almost the only time her name had passed his lips to Guy. He dreamed not of the young author's secret, of course, but he had seen them together, noted with surprise the marked restraint and avoidance between them, and felt there must be a secret behind.

"Very like," Guy answered; "so like that I can see that birthday *fête* and her as she stood dancing in the sunshine. Allan, I should like a copy of that picture to take with me—"

"To your second exile. You shall have it. I have already promised a copy to another old friend of hers—Duke Mason. What a strangely chequered life

hers has been—little Polly Mason reject a duke! Guy, I wonder why she threw over Heatherland. It was not like Paulina."

Before Guy could speak the door opened and Paulina Lisle's father stood before them. Guy sprang erect.

"My dear colonel! You here! I thought you had left England a week ago. Nothing wrong, I hope?"

For Robert Lisle was very pale, very worn, and grave.

"Mrs. Lisle! Paulina!" Guy exclaimed; "they are well, colonel?"

He still addressed him by the familiar title that had been his when they first met.

"Paulina is ill—very ill. I knew it was your last day in London, and I called to tell you. Your people said I would find you here."

Allan Fane dropped his brush, and turned very pale.

Guy listened—what he felt his dark face showing little.

"Very ill," he repeated, slowly; "since when?"

"She was taken ill on the night you left us. It is brain fever. She had received a terrible shock—the revelation of the death of a dear friend, and this, coupled with exposure to damp and previous ill-health, brought about this result. She has been delirious ever since—she is so still. What the end will be Heaven alone knows."

He walked away to the window. Dead silence fell. It was broken by a tap at the door, and the entrance of a servant with a card.

"Inspector Burnham, of the Metropolitan Police," read Mr. Fane, aloud. "Who the deuce is Inspector Burnham, and what does he want here?"

Robert Lisle wheeled round from the window with a startled expression.

"He says his business is with Mr. Earls court, sir," the man answered, "and is most pressing."

Fane looked doubtfully at his friend.

"I don't know what he wants," Guy said, answering that look; "but I'll see him all the same, with your permission, Fane."

Mr. Burnham appeared on the instant. He bowed respectfully to Lisle, and addressed Guy.

"I believe," Inspector Burnham began, politely, "I am speaking to the Honourable Guy Earls court?"

Guy nodded.

"I have been informed, Mr. Earls court, that it is your intention to sail to-morrow for New York. Is it true?"

"It is quite true," answered Guy. "May I ask, in turn, how my departure can possibly concern you?"

"In this way, Mr. Earls court—that it must be postponed."

"Indeed! And why?"

Mr. Burnham glanced at Mr. Lisle, who had grown even paler than upon his entrance, coughed apologetically, and drew a step nearer.

"My business here is of a very unpleasant nature, but it must be done." He laid his hand suddenly and heavily upon Guy's shoulder. "Mr. Earls court, I arrest you on the charge of having caused, or been party to, the death of Alice Warren, on the morning of Christmas Eve, 1862. Mr. Guy Earls court, sir, you must consider yourself my prisoner."

There was an exclamation of horror from Allan Fane—a deepening of the gray pallor upon Robert Lisle's face. But Guy shook off the hand of the detective, and stood looking at him—only one expression in his eyes, an expression of utter amazement.

"The death of Alice Warren!" he exclaimed. "You mean to tell me that Alice Warren is dead?"

"Alice Warren has been a murdered," repeated Inspector Burnham, "foully murdered, on the morning of Christmas Eve, 1862."

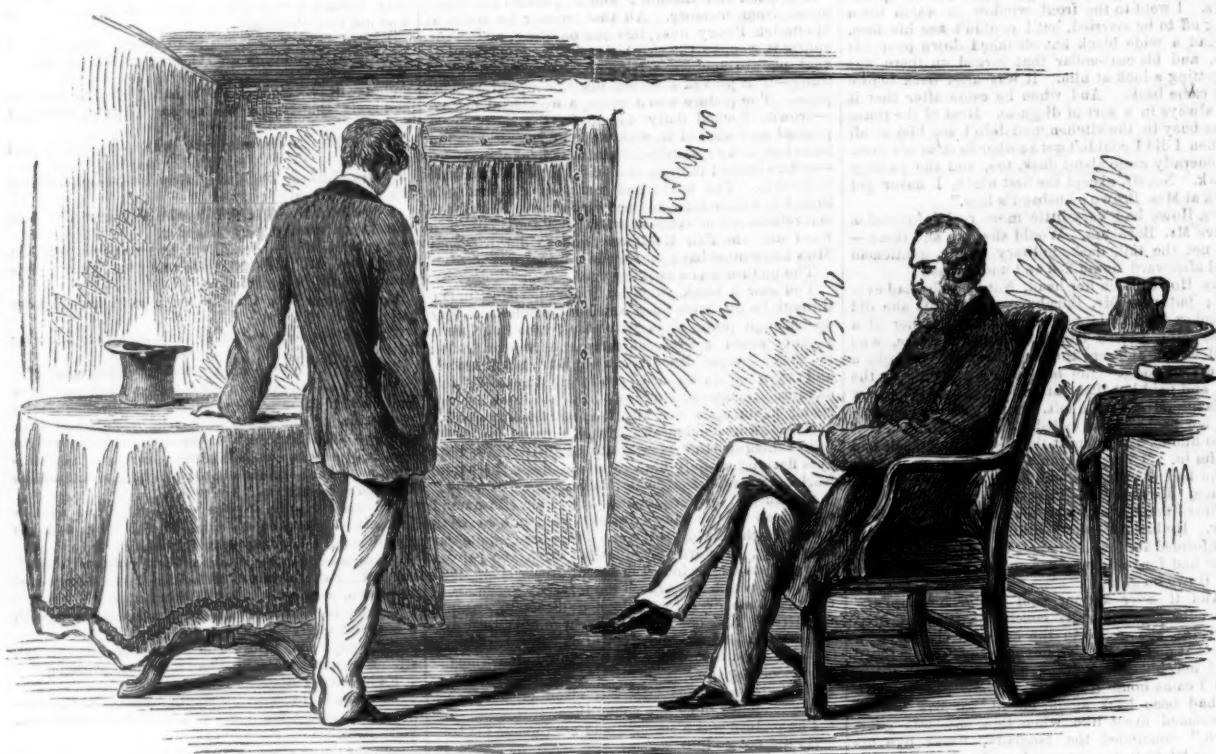
"Murdered!" He repeated the horrible word, staring at the officer mechanically. "Great Heaven!"

His thoughts flew to his brother, and at the awful possibility that suggested itself his dark face blanched to the hue of ashes. Alice Warren murdered! He remembered her as he had seen her last, despairing and alone in a wild winter storm—he remembered the look his brother's face had worn a few hours later when he had spoken of her. Who but Montalieu had an interest in her death? Every trace of colour slowly faded from his face, leaving him white to the very lips. Inspector Burnham saw the change—was it the consciousness of guilt he wondered? Guy slowly recovered himself, and spoke:

"Will you tell me, Mr. Burnham," he said, "what proofs you have that Alice Warren is dead at all, and why you have cause to suspect me?"

Before the detective could speak Robert Lisle came hastily forward.

"Allow me," he said. "I was about to tell you of this, Guy, when Burnham entered. My share in



## [GUY'S LOYALTY.]

bringing about this *dénouement* you must hear from my own lips."

Then he told the story of the sailor's arrival at the cottage, and the confession made to Paulina, which had ended in her dangerous illness; of his and Duke's visit the next day to Inspector Burnham, and of their discovery at Battersea.

"Inspector Burnham knew from us, Guy, that you were the companion of Alice Warren from Lincolnshire to London; that you saw her afterwards, at her lodgings—facts we knew you would have willingly, freely told him yourself had you been present. I never dreamed though that—"

Guy grasped his hand.

"Say no more! You did quite right. My share in this unhappy girl's story the whole world is free to hear. But murdered! Good Heaven! it seems too horrible! I cannot realize it! When did you say?"

"On the morning of Christmas Eve, 1862, between the hours of eight and nine. Of course this preposterous charge against you will fall to the ground immediately. I only wonder at a man of Mr. Burnham's astuteness bringing it forward at all. You will prove an *alibi* at once. Carry your mind back to Christmas Eve, six years ago—the very time, was it not, when you left England? Try and recollect where and with whom you were on Christmas Eve between the hours of eight and nine."

Robert Lisle laid his hand affectionately on the young man's shoulder and looked into his face; and the whole truth burst upon Guy.

On Christmas Eve, 1862, between the hours of eight and nine his strange marriage had taken place. What singular fatality was this? A dark red flush rose up over his olive face, then faded slowly and entirely away. He was very pale, but perfectly calm, as he turned to the detective.

"Have you a cab, Mr. Burnham? I am quite at your service. This is an absurd mistake, colonel!" he added, turning with a smile to Lisle, and holding out his hand, "which will postpone my journey to New York. Farewell for the present! Let us hope that a few days will set this ridiculous error right!"

"But, good Heaven, Guy!" burst forth the artist, "you can surely disprove this monstrous charge at once! Make an effort—you certainly must remember what you were doing and with whom you were on Christmas Eve at that hour."

"I remember very distinctly what I was doing, and with whom I was," Guy said, coolly. "I do not see fit, however, just at present, to take Mr. Burnham into my confidence. I am quite ready to go with him at any moment."

"And when the time comes—in a few hours, or

days—you will prove an *alibi*, and overthrow this preposterous charge?" Lisle demanded, in intense anxiety.

Guy looked at him with a smile—a smile that seemed to have some strange, hidden meaning in its depth.

"And if I cannot prove an *alibi*—if I cannot, or will not, reveal where and with whom I was on that day and at that hour, will you believe me guilty, colonel?"

"Never!" answered Robert Lisle, firmly. "But you do not mean this, Guy?"

"I mean it. This charge must, and will doubtless, fall to the ground of itself; but, come what may, it is out of my power to prove an *alibi*. Good-bye for the present. The inquest, no doubt, will set this disagreeable business all right."

He had gone before they could speak—Mr. Burnham's prisoner. He sat back in the carriage, his hand pressed over his eyes.

"Come what may I will keep my oath!"

He remembered the words well, and to whom they were spoken. Come what might, the secret of that Christmas Eve never could, never would be revealed.

\* \* \* \* \*

It was late in the evening of that same day—the day of Guy EarlsCourt's arrest. The prisoner was not alone—Robert Lisle paced up and down the narrow bounds of the apartment with his powerful cavalry swing, looking much as a caged lion might. He was speaking impatiently, almost angrily.

"You persist in refusing to tell where you were on the morning of Christmas Eve, between eight and nine? Guy, this is folly, this is madness!"

Guy looked at him with his peculiar, gentle smile, quite unmoved, apparently, by his very unpleasant position. They had given him a room as comfortable as it is possible for any room in a London prison to be the last week of July. He had converted the bed into an easy-chair, and looked quite comfortable.

"My dear colonel, how often must I tell you, with every desire to manifest my innocence, an *alibi* is the one thing it is out of my power to prove? Between the hours of eight and nine, on the morning of Christmas Eve, I believe I was driving about the streets of London in a cab the number of which I am totally ignorant of. It was the day of my departure, remember, and I had no end of business on hand. Don't distress yourself on my account, I beg; the chain of circumstantial evidence which Inspector Burnham has forged may seem very strong to Inspector Burnham, even perhaps to a coroner's jury, but it won't stand the test of a grand jury. At the

very worst, should the worst come, it will only be a committal to prison for a few months—a splendid opportunity for quiet meditation, and the writing of another popular novel."

Lisle frowned.

"An opportunity that will effectually blight your reputation, ruin your prospects for life!"

"Hardly, I think. It will be disagreeable, not a doubt about that—if I have a weakness it is for plenty of fresh air and oxygen, and those are luxuries hardly attainable in Newgate, I suppose, during the months of August and September. But my notoriety will scarcely waft across the Atlantic; and I go thither, you know, the hour I am released—and if it do—well if it do, what will it matter?"

Lisle came over, and laid his hand on the younger man's arm.

"Guy," he said, "who is she?"

"Colonel?"

"Who is the woman who is at the bottom of this? Whom are you trying to screen?"

Guy laughed.

"So, colonel," he said, "you go in also for the cynical idea that there must be a woman at the bottom of all the troubles of mankind. I have told you the truth. I was driving about the London streets in a hansom, at that fatal hour on Christmas Eve. Why won't you believe me?"

"I believe that you are trying to screen some one," Lisle answered, resolutely. "I believe that some quixotic piece of foolish generosity will be your ruin. A man's first duties are to Heaven and his country, the second to himself. You could tell, if you would, where and with whom you were between eight and nine on that morning, but you will not."

The smile half faded from Guy's face—a look of strength and deathless loyalty came into its place, and lit it with a nobility the elder man had never seen there before.

"I will not!" he repeated, softly; "not if death were the penalty. Let us say no more on this matter, my friend; all that I can do for my safety shall be done, but an *alibi* I cannot prove—will not, if you like it better. Come what may, you, I trust, will always believe me innocent!"

"Always to the end!"

He knew that farther urging was vain; fidelity to some one, man or woman—the latter, most likely—had sealed Guy EarlsCourt's lips.

He would no more have betrayed that trust than the Earlscourts of old, who had gone to the scaffold, would have saved their heads by the betrayal of their king.

(To be continued.)



## LORD DANE'S ERROR.

### CHAPTER I.

Oh, what a deal of scars looks beautiful  
In the contempt and anger of his lip!

Twelfth Night.

GRAYSTONE, the last ancestral possession of the once-powerful and wealthy Vassars, stood on one of the bleakest, least-frequented portions of the English coast.

The house itself, built of solid gray stone, was scarcely distinguishable from the rocks upon whose barren summits it seemed perched.

There were a few trees of the hardier sort, a neglected lawn, and a kitchen garden.

The house was small, the place most uninviting to one whom luxury was, one might say, a necessity and splendour a passion.

Yet thither one pale autumnal morning came a tall, aristocratic-looking man, upon whose hard, handsome face dissipation and self-indulgence had set marks too plain to be mistaken. His finely curved lips were compressed like one desperately resolved; his eyes dwelt darkly first on the grim walls about him, then upon his companion, and he breathed heavily as he muttered behind his teeth:

"My turn will come."

This man was the last of his name—the last one left of the haughty, proud Vassars—with the exception of a child of eight years. This child he held now by the hand. He had brought her here to live with him, to grow up and be moulded by him for that end to which every aim of his soul was now directed, in which every hope of his life now centred.

It seemed a very fragile foundation on which to base such aspiring ambitions as his. She was pale, thin, slender, with elfish-looking, large, staring eyes, very dark eyebrows, and an abundance of long, nearly white hair, tossing on either side of her strange face and upon the cape of her travelling cloak. Few but would have looked at her a second time, and most people either thought or said:

"What a singular face!"

It was certainly not a handsome one. She was dressed in deep mourning, as was also her father.

This patrician gentleman, Rupert Vassar, had spent three fortunes—his own, his wife's (which had somehow not been settled upon herself before her marriage), and, lastly, one left him in trust for his daughter, the child Sybil, whom he held by the hand now as they entered their last refuge—Graystone.

Badly as he had treated his wife—she died of a broken heart—she had clung to him till the last, and died with her arms round his neck.

LAT LAST.]

When it was too late—the wife he had neglected and wronged gone for ever—remorse seized this reckless spendthrift.

There was no money except a few thousands which the mother had cunningly laid away for her child; a mere pittance that was, if he had dared to use it.

Rupert Vassar was very miserable. He did not know which way to turn or what to do with himself. In the midst of his despair, and under singular circumstances, which need not be explained here, there fell into his possession a secret of such magnitude and importance to another that it was no sooner in his possession than all the evil nature of Rupert Vassar awoke again.

"I've got him now," he thought, vengefully, "and if I live I'll pay off old scores and something more."

There were plenty of people in England whom the ruined gentleman both hated and envied because of their riches and prosperity, and his own poverty. But most of all he envied and hated the handsome, rich, and courted young Earl of Dane. Why, it would have been difficult to say. The young lord was a wild fellow, with an almost exhaustless income, gay, happy, and careless. He might thoughtlessly have angered Vassar at some time. Anyhow Vassar hated him, and had got hold of a secret concerning him which he meant to use remorselessly.

He sent a polite note, asking Dane to come and see him.

The young lord came at once, suspecting nothing. He found Vassar at what had been his town house, a magnificent dwelling in a fashionable and aristocratic square.

It was not his now, it had been sold to pay his debts, and he was only a tenant on sufferance.

No more generous heart, or of naturally better impulses, beat in all England than the young Earl's. But, though barely twenty-two, he had already trod the paths of dissipation, and entered upon evil courses that a true manhood should be ashamed to know.

Knowing the young earl's easy good nature, Vassar flattered himself that he would easily succumb to him.

He was mistaken. Dane laughed at first, as at something too ridiculous and absurd to be treated otherwise, but when Vassar produced his proofs—such as were beyond question—he grew grave enough.

This secret involved his very title and income. He was not prepared to surrender them. He would not have done so without a fight, either on impulse or cool reflection.

He sat stunned, and almost incapable of rational thought.

Vassar watched him for a moment; then he rang a bell, and sent for his daughter—the strange, unlovely child already described. He took her by the hand as she came into the room, and led her to a seat, ceremoniously, obsequiously, as though she had been a princess of the realm.

Lord Dane did not lift his head—his attitude was one of anxiety and suffering.

The child looked compassionately at him with her large eyes.

Vassar was very pale as he said, in a voice that compelled the other's attention:

"My lord, permit me to present you to my daughter, Miss Vassar. Sybil, this is Lord Dane."

The earl rose, expecting from the formality with which Vassar spoke to see a young lady at least. He started slightly as he perceived that the child was meant, and looked at her curiously without being conscious of it.

He bowed courteously however, and sat down again without remark.

Vassar turned to his daughter; taking her hand, he led her back to the door by which she had just entered, his manner one of the same lofty courtesy as when he presented the young earl to her.

Drawing her slight form proudly erect, the child spoke as loftily:

"Pardon," she said, with an indescribable air of curtessy and hauteur, "I choose to remain."

Vassar coloured and gave her a threatening look, opening the door at the same time.

"We will excuse you now, Sybil," he said.

Sybil arched her neck.

"But I do not wish to be excused; and what I choose to do I always do—you ought to know that by this time, papa."

The mixture of childishness and dignity, the combination of impertinence and fine ladyism was very funny.

Lord Dane bit his lip, and Sybil coolly swept—no other word would fitly characterize the movement—past her father, and took refuge in a deep window recess.

Vassar looked for a moment as though he would annihilate her, then he controlled himself and turned to the earl.

This little rencontre by rousing his temper had steadied his nerves. He was ready now to make those propositions for which he had lacked courage before.

"My lord," he said, boldly, "I am a desperate man. I alone hold your secret. I will keep it and

destroy the proofs at a given time, upon certain conditions."

Lord Dane threw up his handsome head; his aristocratic lip curled. "He had not thought Rupert Vassar could be bought; he scorned him for it, but it was all the better for him if he could."

Vassar read his contempt, and it made one more grudge for him to remember.

"What are those conditions?" Lord Dane asked.

Vassar's eyes glittered; his voice shook a little as he repeated them.

"You shall divide your income with me first."

The earl started, his face paling at the insolence of the demand. Then he sank back in his seat with an angry laugh.

"Anything else?" he asked, sarcastically.

"There is something else, my lord," Vassar said, in cold, hard voice. "You have seen my daughter—you shall enter into an agreement with me to marry her the day she is sixteen years of age!"

He paused, his face paling and flushing alternately.

The earl had risen from his seat. He stared at Vassar as though he thought he had lost his senses. Then the ludicrous aspect of the matter suddenly overcame him as he remembered his formal presentation to "Miss Vassar," and the child's own weird, elfish looks. He fell back in his chair, laughing immoderately.

Vassar watched him with lowering eyes.

"My lord," he remonstrated, "you will not find this a laughing matter, I assure you."

Lord Dane was sobered instantly—more by hot anger at Vassar's tone than at his words.

"Explain yourself," he said, his haughty eyes fixed contemptuously on the other's face. "You cannot mean what you said just now—about her?"

"I do mean it, every word."

The young earl's face became white as death.

"You must be a madman then."

"You will find that I am not a madman."

"You don't imagine that I am under your thumb to that extent."

"You are under my thumb, as you call it, to *any* extent I please. If you don't agree to my conditions I'll crush you."

The voice was one of deadly menace—bitter, wicked, viperous.

Lord Dane rose from his chair for the third time. Outwardly he was calm, his face cold and white like sculptured marble.

"It is plain that you don't know whom you are talking to, Mr. Vassar," he said, slowly buttoning his coat. "I am not the cowardly idiot you take me for. I will neither buy you off with half my income nor agree to marry your daughter. Do your worst. Good-morning, sir."

Vassar was in consternation.

"My lord," he said, in an altered voice, "pardon me. I did not mean to be so abrupt. I should not have made the terms so hard if you had not spoken so contemptuously. I don't want to ruin you."

Dane stopped and looked at him with a darkening glance.

"You might as well."

"Do you think so? I'll say a quarter of your income."

The earl smiled bitterly.

"Would you be satisfied with that?"

"That and the marriage when she is old enough."

Again that flash of white anger passed over the earl's face.

"The money part of the business, ridiculously exorbitant as it is, I might consider," he said, hoarsely. "The marriage I never will. It is an insult to any man to propose such a thing."

Neither saw that the child Sybil was watching them eagerly from the shadow of the thick silken window draperies. Both had forgotten that she was in the room.

"Do you think so?" Vassar said, his temper getting the better of him again. "Well, that is an item of my terms which I shall certainly adhere to. The money I wanted to spend in fitting her for her position as your wife."

"You would fit her in vain," the earl answered, with a kind of shudder; "your daughter could never by any possibility grow into the sort of woman I would choose for a wife."

"You have no choice. It must be she or no one."

"No one then. I will die a bachelor."

"Do you defy me?"

"If that is defiance, I do."

"You dare me to ruin you? Do you doubt that I can?"

"Not at all; but even ruin is preferable to some things. If you want money you have only to name the sum. There is a blank cheque; fill it out with any amount you please, but never name that other business to me."

Vassar became suddenly, strangely calm.

"Keep your money," he said; "I can do without it. You won't be apt to forget that I hold what can ruin you at any moment, or to do anything rashly which will compel me to destroy you. I can afford to wait, my lord. You will send for me the next time we meet, and I shall go to you on my own terms."

## CHAPTER II.

Purpose is but the slave to memory.  
Of violent birth, but poor validity. *Hamlet*.

LORD DANE went away angry and uncomfortable, but feeling, on the whole, like a criminal who has obtained a reprieve.

Vassar took his daughter and went down to Graystone.

He had formed a purpose, in the systematic and persevering pursuit of which he showed how thoroughly in earnest he could be, little as his past life had exemplified that possibility. He had not a roof to shelter him save Graystone, and not a penny in the world except the few thousands his dead wife had hoarded from his recklessness.

The money he divided into nine equal portions, eight corresponding to the years he meant should alone intervene between his child and her future coronet; the ninth was for her bridal trousseau, he said to himself, with bitterly set lips.

The splendid furniture and adornments of his town house had not been sold with it. Whatever of these could be used at Graystone were transferred thither.

Silk hangings, gorgeous with embroidery, hid the bare, time-stained walls; velvet carpets, soft and rich, covered the age-darkened floors; and rare statuary, costly paintings, and magnificent mirrors, transformed the grim abode for the splendid-loving, refined gentleman and his strange child.

A library was fitted up in the most lavish and luxurious style for Vassar himself, and three communicating rooms were set apart "en amis," and elaborately garnished and decorated for the little Sybil. Already it pleased him to surround the child with the possessions of state; he frankly meant should one day be hers.

The few but carefully selected servants of the household were taught to observe the most servile and absolute deference in her presence.

She had for her maid an Englishwoman of middle age, highly recommended, who believed her to be the heiress expectant of enormous wealth, and treated her with corresponding subserviency, thus fostering the child's natural impetuosity to an extraordinary degree.

Rarely accomplished himself, Vassar undertook for his part the personal superintendence of the education of the future countess.

Sybil was child of many good traits, among them an affectionate and generous heart. But she had an impetuous and haughty temper, and had already been sadly spoiled by an over-indulgent mother. She was vain, headstrong and wilful beyond description, but for the foolish end he had in view. Rupert Vassar might have abandoned in despair all attempt to improve and polish so fractious and ungovernable a nature.

There was one way, however, in which, when all other means failed he could obtain her obedience and attention in regard to her own culture and improvement.

The child was both ambitious and vindictive, and she had been neither too young nor too obtuse to comprehend the substance of what had passed concerning herself at that interview between her father and Lord Dane. The young earl's handsome face and elegant exterior had captivated her childish fancy, but his contemptuous and indigent language about the marriage had inflicted a fatal wound upon her childhood importance and conceit. Her father taught her to covet his wealth and rank, but she retained a vindictive and bitter remembrance of him strange to see in one of her years.

When her father excited her imagination with extraordinary tales of the earl's magnificence and grandeur she would nod her wicked little head with malicious and delighted comprehension, and he had only to remind her that Lord Dane had refused to marry her, because she was ugly, ignorant, and awkward, to insure her careful attention to his directions for her improvement.

Thus Sybil Vassar grew to be sixteen, with all her finer nature warped by her rearing. But outwardly—marvellous to tell—the ugly, impish-looking child had developed into the grace and beauty of a siren.

It was a remarkable, a wondrous change. That dull, straggling light hair, which had so disfigured her, had grown warm-hued and lustrous, and was so long that when she sat it swept the floor. Her eyes were preternaturally clear, bright and large, her complexion colourless still, it is true, but pure as snow, with a dash of intense carmine on the perfect lips,

and every feature symmetrical as a Greek carving. Hours every day had been spent among the lonely hills about Graystone in such exercise as had eradicated every trace of awkwardness.

Tall, supple, slender, the grace and swiftness of a young panther in all her movements, more than the fire of that untamed creature in her flashing glance, she looked already a being born for conquest and supremacy.

Lord Dane had never married.

From afar Rupert Vassar had noted this fact evidently.

Sybil was not quite sixteen—far too young to cope with that life of temptation, splendour and danger upon which her ambitious and unscrupulous parent longed to launch her. But Vassar's mind was made up. The hour for the grand fruition of his hopes was at hand. He made no calculation for defeat. It never entered his brain that anything could mar his hopes now. Little the selfish and heartless schemer guessed what the future held in store for him and the beautiful creature he had hidden from the world so sedulously that it might be the more hopelessly dazzled at last. It was an enchanted princess he was about to produce to that world, a second Sleeping Beauty whose slumbers he was about to dissolve. He was radiant with anticipation, and exulted every time he looked at the dazzling fairness of his child.

"Dane must send for me before long," he thought; "he can't have forgotten; he won't dare let the day of which I warned him, go by without a sign."

Lord Dane did not indeed mean to do so. It was true that the threat held over him by Vassar had thus far hindered him from marrying.

As the time drew near, when Vassar would be likely to press his demands again, the earl, demoralized somewhat by the life of ease and pleasure in which he had spent the intervening eight years, felt himself less ready than before to surrender his position, his title, his houses, lands and money. But he found himself still unable to think of anything but aversion and shuddering of Sybil Vassar, the ugly and awkward child who had inspired him with such aversion.

More than ever was he resolved that nothing should induce him to marry her, but at the same time he would be crafty and wary, and see if he could not outwit Vassar at his own game.

Sybil Vassar was within a week of her sixteenth birthday when, one morning at the breakfast-table, her father, with a sort of suppressed excitement in his tone and look, made to her three rather startling announcements.

The first was that he had obtained for her a French maid—a true *Parisienne*—in place of Abby, her English servant.

The second, that he had purchased for her, through a friend in Paris, an entirely new, superb, and perfect wardrobe, which was coming to Graystone that day in charge of the new maid.

The third piece of information was that they were to have a guest at dinner.

"I am not personally acquainted with him," Mr. Vassar said, looking at his daughter in a peculiar manner; "but he brings a letter of introduction from an old friend of mine, and I wish you to dine with us and help me entertain him."

Sybil looked up in amazement.

Guests came sometimes at rare intervals to Graystone, and dined with Mr. Vassar, but they never met his daughter. "No one shall see how beautiful you have grown, Sybil," her father had always said, "until you are ready to burst upon the world like a new sun."

Hence Sybil's surprise at being asked to dine with a stranger.

Her perfect face changed slightly as she asked:

"It is not Lord Dane you expect, papa?"

"No; the gentleman's name is Heath. Be very careful of your toilet, my dear; I suspect this gentleman may be sent by Lord Dane to pass judgment on you."

"The girl's scarlet lip curved scornfully.

"I understand," she said; "his lordship is curious to know what hideous creature Rupert Vassar's daughter most resembles now she has left her childhood behind her."

She left the room with a haughty step, and mounted the narrow, old-fashioned staircase which led to her own apartments.

She lingered for a moment—half in anger, half in doubt—before the tall cheval glass in her dressing-room, wondering if he who was coming at evening had seen any where a face whose velvety beauty could compare with hers.

Then she shook down the soft, shimmering, floating abundance of her wonderful hair, and lifted her arms to note the slender yet luxurious outlines of a form Psycho might have envied.

Suddenly that Parian brow clouded, the lustrous eyes dropped.

A little tremor ran through the girl's slight yet stately form.

"He is waiting there now, I daresay," she murmured. "I've a mind not to go to him at all. I ought never to have gone."

Then she threw up her head impatiently, while a burning flush dyed her face.

"Tush! I'm not in love. I'll go once more and have done with him."

She summoned her maid. All that pale glory of hair was hastily bestowed in a gorgeous coil at the back of the shapely head; then the girl brought her mistress's walking suit.

This consisted of a conveniently short dress of violet cloth, both pretty and serviceable, doeskin gauntlets, a "soft" hat with a wide brim, and stout balmarors—perfectly fitting a charming foot—completed the list.

Usually she was accompanied in her rambles over the hills by a favourite of herself and father—a huge dog, half bloodhound, half mastiff—who would obey no one but them. But for the past two weeks the animal had been in disgrace for some piece of mischievous ferocity, and was kept chained.

Declining the attendance of a servant, therefore Sybil went alone.

Her father considered her perfectly safe in doing so, but, if he could have followed her unseen this morning, or on some others previous, he might have altered his opinion.

He little suspected the mine that was being laid for the destruction of all his fine and daring plans.

Mr. Vassar was smoking on a balcony as Sybil passed out. He called after her:

"Don't tire yourself this morning, my dear."

"I don't know what it is to be tired, sir," Sybil answered, lightly, as she sprang down the narrow stairs with the step of a gazelle.

Her father's eye followed her exultantly, as it always did.

"I believe she's the handsomest creature in England this day!" he muttered to himself.

At this very moment, while Sybil was skimming down the rocky path that led towards the sea, a gentleman in sportsman's attire was slowly pacing one of the sunniest nooks of the slopes below. He paused now and then, with a listening expression, and flashed a pair of intense blue eyes towards an opening in the cliff, so rocky and steep that it seemed no step but that of a chamois could dare its descent safely.

Rather tall and extremely handsome was this stranger, with chestnut curls, waving above a white, broad brow, and a beard of a tawny gold, half concealing the lower part of his face.

"How densely stupid I was to come here," he said, at last, impatiently, "and what a blockhead Dane was to send me! He ought to have known better, if I did not; and then, from his description of the girl, who could have expected to meet what I have found? Ugly, awkward and ill-natured, he represented her to be. She could never have been that. I am certain of it. Then the programme we two idiots had marked out! I was to come down here forsooth, make her fall in love with me, and through her get hold of the papers. Bah! I could see myself shot for a donkey—a miserable, blundering dol."

He kicked a pebble from his path spitefully as he spoke. Then he threw himself down upon the turf for a moment, and got up again, grumbling still.

"She's certainly been more than a match for me so far. It makes me tingle ye to remember how cool she was that morning when I tumbled off the cliff there, and nearly broke my neck trying to make her acquaintance. I believe in my soul she thought I was shamming all the time."

His face flushed.

"There's one thing in my favour," he resumed, knitting his white forehead. "She does come here to meet me, and she lets me make love to her, in a fashion. But then she has a way of looking at me with those big, clear eyes of hers that makes me feel as though she saw right through me. Hullo!"

He paused as a loose stone rolled down from the rocky path above, and stood with an eagerness he was quite unconscious of glowing in his deep blue eyes.

"At last," he cried, springing forward and descending both his hands as Sybil Vassar appeared descending the dizzy path with her swaying but sure step. She had climbed among the rocky fastnesses of Graystone till no chamois was more agile or sure footed than she.

She laughed when she saw him and put her hands behind her, but there was a troubled light in her strange, brilliant eyes that belied that sweet and mocking laughter.

The handsome stranger regarded her reproachfully.

"Yesterday you went away without shaking hands, to-day you come without."

"I am not coming at all any more. This is the

last time," she said, with an assumption of coolness. "Our little play is played out."

The stranger coloured and bit his lip.

"You are very cool about it."

"Am I? Why should I be?"

The young man—he was young, not more than five-and-twenty—averted his face for a moment. Sybil Vassar was always beautiful, and there was to-day an unclouded softness in her air, despite her sarcastic and saucy speeches, that rendered her doubly and dangerously attractive. He felt his pulses throbbing as with magnetic fire, and then, all in an instant, it flashed over him that to call this bright, dazzling, capricious young creature his own he would be willing to sacrifice every hope in life. His face flushed painfully and grew white again with that swift emotion.

Sybil was uneasy. She extended her little hand, ungloved, and daintily white.

"Good-bye," she said. "I'll shake hands now, as it's the last time."

A light, half malicious, half eager, sparkled suddenly in the stranger's eyes.

"You and I will meet again?" he said, compressing his lips.

Sybil arched her slender brows.

"I daresay, but not here."

"In your father's presence, then, at Graystone."

Sybil's eyes flashed with both anger and anxiety.

"You would never come there to claim an acquaintance made under these circumstances?"

"I might ask your father to present me to you," he suggested, sarcastically.

"You would ask in vain; my father has an insurmountable objection to my forming the acquaintance of gentlemen," Sybil answered, frigidly, alarmed at the prospect.

What would her father say if he knew how imprudent she had been?

"Yet he is to present one to you this evening," asserted the young man positively.

Sybil started.

"Who told you that? How could you know?"

"Possibly from the circumstance of a stranger stopping at the hotel where I am staying. Strangers are not so common as to attract no attention in this isolated place."

The mysterious friend of Lord Dane felt an angry pain at his heart as he watched Sybil's evident uneasiness and alarm.

"She is alarmed lest she may have endangered her prospects with Dane by meeting me here," he thought.

"Possibly," he resumed, in that bitter voice, "this stranger may not be uncommunicative concerning the errand which takes him to Graystone. Pardon, Miss Vassar, any momentary chagrin I may have displayed at the prospect of seeing you no more. With such magnificent prospects in the future as yours I could not reasonably blame you for declining to amuse yourself longer with one so obscure and humble as myself."

Sybil grew white and cold at the bitterness and anger with which he spoke. It seemed to her for an instant that her heart had stopped beating. At this moment the splendour and magnificence, the high station she had been taught to covet, looked of small importance beside the love and kindness of him whose eyes were fastened in reproachful anger on her face.

To her he was nameless; he had never told her who he was; he might be poor, come from the humbler ranks of life, and she had not known him two weeks yet, but he had touched her heart as no one else ever would.

She was at this moment a simple loving girl, instead of the selfish, ambitious and mercenary creature her father had tried to make her.

She covered her eyes with one hand, as if to shut out the sight of that passionate, too-handsome face.

"I—do—not understand you," she faltered, slowly.

The stranger laughed angrily.

"Is not your father expecting a guest to dine with him this evening, and are you not, contrary to custom, to help entertain him? And yet you do not understand me? Fie, Miss Vassar! Perhaps you have not yet been made aware that this stranger guest, this Mr. Heath, is in reality a sort of ambassador from our Lord Dane? Permit my congratulations!"

He bowed low and mockingly.

"You will be a titled lady, with carriages and plate, town houses and jewels fit for a princess. As for me I am too poor to marry at present, unless indeed I could imitate you and marry some rich dame whom I should detest at the same time that I made her my wife for the sake of her money."

Lord Dane's mysterious friend spoke with increasing passion. He foresaw that the earl would no sooner behold Sybil in all her glorious young beauty than he would cease his aversion to her and long to make her his wife.

Her ambitious and selfish disposition he had little conception of; but he suspected something of the truth.

Sybil was recovering her self-possession. His own words, the startling reference to Lord Dane, the allusion to the splendours that awaited his wife, had done much to recall her to the folly and imprudence of those emotions which were thrilling her heart. She suddenly lifted her head with a gesture of pride and displeasure.

"You are wrong," she said; "I do not know anything of the sort you intimate. I do not believe it is so; and if it were you would have no right to speak to me in this manner about it."

She turned suddenly, and darted away up the steep path.

The stranger looked after her, stern and sorrowful.

"I love her against all reason and prudence; but I believe I could win her if there were time. I feel it in my soul. I wonder if I could keep her and the earl from meeting yet awhile if I tried."

### CHAPTER III.

The hind that would be mated by the lion  
Must die for love. *All's Well that Ends Well.*

MEANWHILE Sybil was saying to herself as she pursued her fleet course:

"How near I was to casting away a coronet just now. Papa would never have forgiven me. I wonder if he was only guessing about Lord Dane."

The dining-room at Graystone was neither lofty nor spacious; but there were some very fine paintings on the walls, and it was furnished with much richness and taste.

The new French maid arrived at noon, and with her came a quantity of luggage that made the servants stare, and filled Sybil with secret awe and impatience, for she guessed that those immense boxes contained that wonderful new wardrobe of which her father had spoken.

"Leave the selection of your dress to Adèle," Mr. Vassar said to his daughter, in an aside; "she will know best what is suitable for you."

The new maid surveyed her new mistress gravely and solemnly, and decided the momentous question like a true artiste.

"With that hair and those eyes, and that colourless face," she uttered, oracularly, "mademoiselle should wear the Undine toilet. Can I see mademoiselle's jewellery?"

With a pardonable pride Sybil threw open her jewel box.

The Vassar jewels had come to her from her mother, and they were very fine.

The Frenchwoman's eyes sparkled.

"These are what you should wear," she said, touching a velvet case in which were clustered an exquisite set of diamonds, tastefully displayed in a pale, nearly invisible rim of silver. "They are crystallized drops of water, mademoiselle—do you see? But wait; they must be seen beside the dress."

"Diamonds for me? I thought I was too young—and at home too?" remonstrated Sybil.

"Mademoiselle—ah, no. Mademoiselle is so stately, and her style is so peculiar," rattled on Adèle, while the box containing the Undine toilet was being brought in; "and the stones are set so plainly."

Sybil uttered a cry of rapture as Adèle lifted from its tissue wrappings the Undine toilet.

The dress itself was of some pale green, glistening material, like water flowing over tangles of seaweed. A long, yellow-green spray of seaweed for the hair accompanied the dress, and a tiny pair of green satin shoes, which fitted to a charm the beautiful feet for which they were intended.

"I am Cinderella going to meet the prince," Sybil thought as she beheld herself in the dressing-glass. "How tall, how slender, how lovely my shape is in this dress. I wonder if this is what papa calls style!"

But when Adèle would have clasped the diamonds on her white throat and arms she put them back, smiling, but firm.

"Not to-night," she said.

Then she floated away to join her father and his guest, beautiful, exulting, confident.

She was, perhaps, a little flurried as she approached the drawing-room, but there was no sign of it in her manner as she entered, regal in loveliness and superbly self-possessed, as though half her short lifetime had been spent in royal saloons.

Both Mr. Vassar and his guest rose to meet her.

Mr. Vassar presented Mr. Heath.

Mr. Heath, a tall, handsome, elegant-looking gentleman, bowed deeply as Miss Vassar bowed, and raised his eyes as she lifted hers.

For an instant Sybil thought her senses had forsaken her. She must have fallen asleep among the hills, and was still dreaming of that mysterious hand-

some stranger, who had so powerfully affected her heart and her fancy.

Then it flashed over her—his hints—his knowledge of Lord Dane. Her father's guest and the stranger were one.

Dinner was at that moment announced, fortunately for her, and her father, absorbed in his duties as host, either did not observe her agitation or else attributed it to other causes than the true ones.

As Mr. Heath offered his arm to conduct her from the room he whispered, passionately:

"Can you ever forgive me, Sybil?"

Startled though she was, and so completely taken by surprise, Sybil proved both her race and her training by the way she lifted her haughty head, and looked at him, composed, frigid as an iceberg.

"Miss Vassar, if you please," she said.

Heath coloured deeply, but bowed without speaking.

"How dare he call me Sybil?" thought the arrogant girl. "If it is because I met him under the cliffs I will soon teach him better."

Mr. Heath was to remain at Graystone till the following day.

Sybil was uneasy and anxious.

"I must know what I have to expect," she thought, and, watching her chance, asked Heath for an explanation of his conduct.

He only smiled mysteriously, and refused to give any.

Sybil angrily insisted.

"Perhaps, like you, I was amusing myself," he said.

"Did Lord Dane send you down here?"

"I brought a letter of introduction from him."

"Did he send you?"

"Do you think I would acknowledge it if he did?"

He said, with a tantalizing smile.

"But I insist."

"What if I said he did?"

Sybil's beautiful eyes glowed suddenly.

"What shall you tell him when you go back to him?"

Heath's handsome face whitened, and his teeth clenched. Then he smiled constrainedly.

"What would you have me tell him?"

"What you like; I am not afraid of you, Mr. Heath."

"I should be very sorry if you were."

"Will you tell me what you intend to say to Lord Dane about me?"

"As little as possible, believe me."

"Why as little as possible?"

"Do you think I am an iceberg? Because it would be more than I, than any man in my situation could bear to talk calmly of you to the one who is to be your husband."

Sybil surmounted at his vehemence. Then she said, indignantly:

"You are talking of what you know nothing about, just as you were yesterday when you talked about my becoming a titled lady."

Heath looked at her searchingly for a moment, then, still watching her, he said:

"I was only jesting then; I have not the honour to be in Lord Dane's confidence to the extent I pretended to you. I said it to try you. I wanted to see if your head was as easily turned as most women's."

He fancied that her countenance fell a little, but he was not sure.

"What conclusion did you come to?" Sybil asked, scornfully.

"I inferred that it was; you seemed decidedly elated at my intimations concerning Lord Dane."

Sybil coloured and bit her lip.

"Thank you," she said, coldly; "it is pleasant to be read so correctly."

Then she bowed frigidly and was going out of the room when he sprang forward.

"Don't go. Forgive me," he said; "I was very impudent. But it was all because I love you so myself. I can't bear to have you marry Lord Dane. I know there is talk of it. But it will never be, Sybil, believe me—"

He paused, angry at himself for having said that, and continued, abruptly:

"I love you, Sybil; will you marry me, and trust to my ability to make you as happy as ever Lord Dane could, rich as he is, and poor as I am?"

Sybil's heart was beating fast. Her exquisite face drooped and was half averted from him; a sweet confusion seemed for the moment to wrap her as in a rosy cloud.

Then she suddenly snatched away her hand which he had caught in his, and drew back pale and cold. She spoke in a cold and measured voice:

"Mr. Heath," she said, "I have lived here at Graystone, alone with my father and his servants, for eight long years. I have lived isolated and without pleasure, my life given to the drudgery of study and accomplishments. I hate study, I hate accomplishments. I detest this horrible old rookery of a house. I love pleasure, luxury, splendour, fine equipages, lofty state. I cannot live without them. Can you give them to me?"

"Not at first, perhaps—not at once, but in time. Listen to me, my darling. I can get a foreign appointment. I might if you would marry me—"

Sybil stopped him with a chilly smile. She had been taught to value as absolutely essential to happiness wealth and its attendant splendours. She shook her head.

"I cannot marry you," she said. "Don't talk any more about it. I would rather marry a man I hate than to be poor. That is the whole truth."

Heath heard her with a sort of angry despair. He had done worse things himself than to covet rank and wealth, as this young girl had been taught to do. His true errand at Graystone, indeed, had been one worthy of Sybil's most bitter contempt and anger, and he despised himself now for having ever undertaken it; but none the less he was filled with a blind rage at Sybil for the mercenary and ambitious desires she so openly avowed. The sight of her rare loveliness, too, which the moment's excitement increased, added fuel to the flame in his soul; yet he spoke calmly enough.

"You are quite right," he said, frigidly. "I am a poor man. More than that, I have not even a right to my own name. If you married me you would have to resign yourself to obscurity, self-denial, and the absence of all luxuries; you would never be able to ride in anything more pretentious than a cab. In short, a life with me would be the sharpest penury beside that which Lord Dane could give you. I have no riches but my worship of you, for which may Heaven forgive me, for a more selfish and heartless coquette was never created."

He ground out the last words between his teeth so that they were almost inarticulate; but Sybil caught the one "coquette," and her luminous eyes glowed again. She had her own suspicions concerning his real errand at Graystone—nearer the truth than might have been expected, perhaps—yet she spoke sweetly.

"Did I seek you first, Mr. Heath? Did I throw myself in your way, and strive to attract your attention by artifices a child could have seen through? I am sixteen; you are a man of mature years, and worldly wise beyond any possibility of achievement on my part. I presume I am very bad naturally, and may some day become the wicked creature you so evidently think me now; but at present I am conscious of but two occurrences in my life of which I am seriously ashamed; and, lest your imagination should become too lively concerning those, I will name them. The first was making a trip to Falkner, about a year ago, without my father's knowledge, and during his absence from home; the second, my imprudent listening to the solicitations of an utter stranger, and according him a secret acquaintance, which, perhaps, justifies him in forming his present opinions of me."

To this satirical and richly deserved speech Heath responded in a singular manner, and with suppressed exultation, very different from his emotion before.

"To Falkner? A year ago?" And his deep eyes seemed to devour Sybil. "Ah! you had an adventure there, did you not?"

Sybil looked half startled, half amused, and Heath's exultation increased. He quite forgot himself again the next moment.

"It was another case of love at first sight. I have heard about it. But have a care, Sybil Vassar! It might be in my power to entirely dispel some of your ambient visions."

Sybil responded instantly and contemptuously:

"Don't threaten me, please; it is in such very poor taste for a gentleman to threaten a lady."

She moved toward the door. Her intention was evident.

Heath, grown suddenly penitent once more for his rashness, entreated her to remain.

"Good-bye," she said, in the same contemptuous tone. "We shall not meet again during your stay. If need be, I shall tell my father why. Good-bye, Mr. Heath."

And she quitted the room.

Mr. Heath could have bitten his tongue off for its imprudent and rash insolence. But it was too late.

That evening he left Graystone abruptly.

He had lost her, and he felt that he might have won her. But it was too late now.

He went from Graystone direct to the nearest station, and took the first train back to London.

He was in a gloomy, half-desperate mood as he made his way the following morning to Lord Dane's town house.

The earl welcomed him eagerly.

"I thought you were never coming," he said, shaking Heath warmly by the hand and motioning him to a seat in a crimson-cushioned easy-chair.

(To be continued.)

the morning, and they will find their actual weight is at least a pound less in the morning. Frequently there will be a loss of two or more pounds, and the average loss throughout the year will be a pound of matter, which has gone off from their bodies, partly from the lungs, and partly through the pores of the skin. The escaped matter is carbonic acid, and decayed animal matter or poisonous exhalation. This is diffused through the air in part, and part absorbed by the bed-clothes. If a single ounce of wood cotton be burned in a room it will so completely saturate the air with smoke that one can hardly breathe, though there can only be one ounce of foreign matter in the air. If an ounce of cotton be burned every half-hour during the night the air will be kept continually saturated with smoke, unless there be an open window or door for it to escape. Now the sixteen ounces of smoke thus formed is far less poisonous than the sixteen of exhalations from the lungs and bodies of two persons who have lost a pound in weight during the eight hours of sleeping; for, while the dry smoke is mainly taken into the lungs, the damp odours from the body are absorbed both into the lungs and into the pores of the whole body. Need more be said to show the importance of having bed-rooms well ventilated, and of thoroughly airing the sheets, coverlets, and mattresses in the morning before packing them up in the form of a neatly made bed?

#### ANECDOTE OF DR. FRANKLIN.

DR. FRANKLIN once was in company of several members of the Royal Society, to which he had been admitted, when the conversation turned upon discoveries and inventions yet to be made for the practical benefit of man.

Franklin regretted that no method had yet been discovered whereby one person might spin a number of threads of cotton or wool at the same time. A few days before they had visited one of the cotton-spinning districts, where all the threads for the looms were spun by women and children with the old-fashioned spinning-wheel with its single spindle. Franklin's companions smiled incredulously, and Dr. Priestley, who was of the number, declared that the thing was impossible. But Franklin did not think so. He not only deemed the thing practicable, but declared it as his opinion that it would not much longer remain a mystery.

In less than ten years afterward (1761) James Hargreaves invented and set in operation his spinning-jenny, by which he at first spun eight threads at the same time, and afterward eighty. Soon afterward Richard Arkwright invented an improvement in the carding machine, by which the roll, or sliver, was made not only uniform in size, but coiled into an incipient thread called "roving."

In 1779, while Franklin was yet living, a hale and hearty old man, Samuel Crompton, of Bolton, invented a machine which combined the spinner or jenny, by which he at first spun eight threads at the same time, and afterward eighty. Soon afterward Richard Arkwright invented an improvement in the carding machine, by which the roll, or sliver, was made not only uniform in size, but coiled into an incipient thread called "roving."

Thus Franklin lived to see a hundred threads spun by a machine attended by a single person; and had he lived to our day, he might have seen that hundred multiplied many times. S. O. J.

DISCOVERIES IN BRAZIL.—The return of Professor C. F. Hartt, of Ithaca, from his late expedition to Brazil, has been already announced in the papers, and we are glad to learn that he succeeded in making many important discoveries in natural history and the geography of the country, and especially the languages of the native tribes. By his researches in this latter direction he has already become quite an authority, and, we presume, will before long begin to publish his linguistic results. In the course of his expedition Professor Hartt took occasion to examine the great Kiockenwooding, near Santarem, referred to by various travellers, which, however, yielded him only a few fragments of coarse pottery and a few bones. He was very fortunate in the opportunity of excavating the sites of a number of Indian villages on the edge of the bluffs bordering the Amazon and the Tapajos, in the angle made by the two rivers. Here he found an immense quantity of broken pottery, often highly ornamented, idols, stone implements, etc., probably derived from the Tapajos, now extinct as a tribe, or merged into the mixed Indian population of the Amazon. In an ancient burial-place on the Tapajos he dug up a number of burial-pots—none, however, containing complete skeletons. An examination of the mounds of the island of Marajo was to be made by some of his associates who remained behind.

ALGERIA AS A HEALTH-RESORT.—On the coast Algeria has but two seasons, the dry and warm, the cool and moist. The former, says the *Lancet*, lasts from May to September, the latter from September

to May. As with ourselves, the coldest wind in Algiers is the north-west; the nearer the wind to the south the warmer and drier it is. During the eight months from the middle of September to the middle of May there are about fifty-eight days during which the temperature is comparatively cold—about equal to that of the middle of May in Scotland. The invalid, however, must have more than a knowledge of mean temperature; he must know its fluctuations in bright weather and in cloudy, as well as in house interiors. Algiers itself has three hotels of repute, well situated towards the sea; but they are surrounded and overtopped by closely built streets, which load the wind as it blows seaward with fetid effluvia. Nature has done more for Algiers as a health-resort than for any of its Mediterranean rivals. From the distant Atlas the ground, richly wooded and undulating, slopes down some miles in length to the sea, and is studded with white villas, among which the "Villa Orientale" deserves notice as a private hotel, well appointed, perfectly clean and rich in the attractions of earth and sea and sky. As a resort for the physical, indeed, the colony possesses attractions which, if adequately utilized, would go far to recoup France for the expense incurred, and to compensate her for the losses sustained through that military system to which its conquest inured her ill-fated army.

## TOWN AND COUNTRY GENTLEMEN.

WHO would not recognize the country gentleman in town? His gait and dress are assuredly unmistakable. In summer we meet him strutting about the streets with his coat-tails gracefully waving in the breeze behind him, a spotless waistcoat adorning his capacious corporation, his light speckled trousers rather baggy about the knee, with a stern determination to regard comfort rather than appearance. He ever wears large, loose shoes, between which and the ends of his trousers are displayed six inches of what once were white socks, but are now, owing to the summer dust, beautiful silver-gray. On his head there, repose—gracefully reclining backwards—the unmistakable dove-coloured, wide-awake, as the sensible fellow declares the hard edge of a chimney-pot equal to one of the tortures of the Inquisition. His rosy cheeks seem ever cool and fresh, and his bland and smiling countenance tells of the delights of a perfect digestion. Accustomed to gazing on the beauties of Nature, he elevates his head, perhaps a little too high, and so trips on the kerbstone, which makes him appear a little undignified. It is interesting to watch him at a crowded crossing. He stands on the brink of what, to him, seems truly a matter of life or death. He patiently waits for a good clearance of cabs and carts, gazing with an astonished look at those who, coming up after him, cross, seemingly heedless of their lives, then makes a frantic dart, and lands himself safely at the other side, where he erects his head in the highest self-satisfaction.

Alas! the physical appearance of the gentleman about town is a much sadder spectacle. His emaciated form and bilious complexion speak of dissipation and late dinners. True, his tailor makes up for his want of flesh by abundant padding; even in the hottest weather his coat is equal in heat to a furnace; but boxes of antiphilous pills would never be able to bring a glow of health to that countenance, the hue of which is almost a bright gamboge. The purest sarsaparilla could not rid that complexion of its flowery blossoms, nor could gallons of cod-liver oil bring becoming plumpness to that gaunt and bony form. It is amusing to see the town gentleman in the country. He goes there, not from love of its charms, but merely because it is "the thing" to do in July. Whilst there he hardly knows what to do with himself; so does not rise till mid-day, and, after finishing an elaborate toilet, and perfume himself to the last degree, he saunters out and pays a few visits, in the hope of meeting some one to "knock up a flirtation with."

This he usually succeeds in doing with some artless girl, who almost believes him to be the real Prince of the fairy tale. The only blemish in his bravery is that she finds he is very much afraid of cows! Therefore, he prefers walking on the dusty roads to strolling in the green fields. He carries on this violent flirtation to the end of the season, and when the last good-bye comes he looks unutterable things, but says nothing.

A SHREWD FORTUNE-TELLER.—A fortune-teller was arrested in Paris, and carried before the tribunal of correctional police. "You know how to read fortunes?" said the president, a man of great wit, but rather too fond of a joke for a magistrate. "I do, sir," replied the sorcerer. "In this case," said the president, "you know the judgment we intend to pronounce." "Certainly." "Well, what will happen to you?" "Nothing." "Are you sure of that?" "Yes; you will acquit me." "Acquit you?" "There is no doubt of it." "Why?" "Because, sir, if it had been

your intention to condemn me you would not have added irony to misfortune." The president, disconcerted, turned to his brother judges, and the sorcerer was discharged.

LONGEVITY IN THE EASTERN COUNTIES.—During the three months of November, December, and January last the *Ipswich Journal* has recorded the deaths of no less than 195 persons over 70 years of age. Of these 195 persons 56 died in November, 74 in December, and the remaining 65 in January. Of the 56 who died in November 6 were over 90 years old, and averaged 93 years 10 months; 23 were between 80 and 90, and averaged 84 years, 5 months, 3 weeks; 27 were over 70, and averaged 74 years each. Eight of the 74 who died in December were over 90 years of age, and averaged 93 years; 30 were over 80 years of age, and averaged 83 years, 4 months; and 36 over 70, averaging 74 years, 2 months, 2 weeks, 8 days. In January one centenarian died; 9 of the remaining 64 persons recorded as dead in that month were over 90 years of age, and averaged 93 years, 6 months, 2 weeks, 6 days; 25 were over 80, and averaged 83 years, 8 months, 4 days; and 30 were over 70, at an average of 75 years, 1 month, and 6 days. In addition to these two persons have died in Suffolk during the past year who had reached the age of 104 years. These were Mrs. Peck, of Kirtley, who died on the 28th of January, 1871; and Mr. John Large, at Wickham Market, on the 28th of last March.

A DARING GAME;  
on,  
NEVA'S THREE LOVERS.

## CHAPTER XL.

AT the grim and warlike announcement of Mrs. Peters's identity, delivered in Mrs. Peters's grimmost and most warlike manner, Rufus Black recoiled involuntarily, his face expressing his utter amazement.

He had felt confident that this angular and sour-visaged woman was Miss Wroat, and that his deserted young wife was in her employ, under the assumed name of Mrs. Peters. In his astonishment and disappointment he stood pale and speechless.

"You may go down, Mary," said Mrs. Peters to the housemaid. "The gentleman came to see me, you hear."

The housemaid, being in awe of Mrs. Peters, precipitately retired to the servants' hall.

"And now, sir," said Mrs. Peters, in such a voice as she might have employed in uttering a challenge, "what may you want with me?"

Rufus Black struggled to regain his self-control.

"There is some mistake," he gasped. "I—I remember you. I saw you day, with—with a young lady. I thought she called herself Mrs. Peters. I have come to see her."

"Come in," said Mrs. Peters, who was in inward terror of Lally's appearance upon the scene, and had made up her mind to prevent an interview between the young pair at all costs. "Come in, sir, and I'll hear what you have to say."

She conducted him to the library, which was across the hall from the drawing-rooms. It was lighted by a pendant chandelier, in which were a dozen wax-candles radiant with mellow light. A great circular bay-window took up one side of the apartment, the opposite side containing a great fireplace, in which logs were burning. The angles on either side the chimney were fitted with tall book-cases, and one end of the room was also lined with rows of shelves well filled with books, and protected by plate-glass doors. At the opposite end of the room was a glazed garden door, opening upon the grassy terrace.

This room already bid fair to become a favourite resort of Lally. She had ordered it to be warmed and lighted at the same time with the drawing-rooms, and was likely to visit it during the evening. Mrs. Peters locked the door, therefore, as she motioned Rufus to a seat. He declined the civility, however, and remained standing, his hat in his hand.

"I remember you very well now," said Mrs. Peters, pretending to search her memory, "now that you have mentioned the picture shop. You are the young gentleman who annoyed the young lady with me. Yes, I remember you. What are you doing here? Why have you followed us to Scotland? Why have you come to Heather Hills?"

"I have come, madam," cried Rufus, white and agitated, "to see the young lady who was in your company at Benson's the other day. It is imperative that I should see her."

"I think not," said Mrs. Peters, gravely. "In the first place, how can you be sure that the young lady is in this house?"

"I have traced her and you all the way from London," cried Rufus. "I saw the card you gave to Benson, with the name upon it of Miss Wroat, Mount Street, with the number. I went to Mount Street twice, and the second time discovered that you had left town. I hurried to the station of the

Great Northern, and found that the express had gone. Then—"

"And then?"

"I went to my hotel. I had not money enough for such a trip as this," said Rufus, frankly, "so I could not come by the morning train. I had to sell my watch, a recent present from my father, and, as I had then all the day on my hands before I could start for the north, I went to Mount Street again. In one of the streets near I inquired at a shop about Miss Wroat, and there learned that she was an eccentric old lady—excuse me, madam, but I received a very accurate description of you, from which I inferred that you are Miss Wroat, and that Lally is Mrs. Peters. I took the night train for Edinburgh twenty-four hours later than yourself. I reached Inverness this afternoon, and discovered the names of Miss Wroat and Mrs. Peters registered at the 'Caledonian.' A servant of the house told me that you were at Heather Hills, and a cabman brought me here. I know that Lally is in this house, madam, and I must see her!"

Mrs. Peters smiled grimly as a full comprehension of Rufus Black's mistake dawned upon her. She understood readily that the shopman whom Rufus had interrogated had not known of Mrs. Wroat's death, and had confounded the names of Mrs. Wroat and Miss Wroat, and that Rufus very naturally thought her the "eccentric old lady" of whom he had heard.

"So you don't believe that I am Mrs. Peters?" she asked.

"No, madam," said Rufus, bluntly. "I have traced an elderly lady—yourself—and a young girl—Lally—all the way from London, and under the names of Miss Wroat and Mrs. Peters. You are not Mrs. Peters, and I demand to see her."

"You cannot see her," said Mrs. Peters, stoutly. "I have heard the young lady's story, and I shall protect her from the persecutions of a man who deserted her in the most cowardly fashion, and, believing her to be dead, never made one movement to save her supposed remains from interment in a pauper's grave. You have no claim upon Miss Bird, Mr. Rufus Black; you have yourself declared that she is not your wife."

"Lally has told you all?" cried Rufus, in a low, heart-broken voice. "Not all though, for even she does not know all—the sleepless nights I've passed, the days of anguish! I've hated myself, and despised myself. I have been on the point again and again of committing suicide. Her poor young face, as I fancied it, mutilated and dead, has haunted me sleeping and waking. Heaven alone knows my anguish, my remorse! If Lally only knew all!"

"She knows more than you think," said Mrs. Peters, significantly.

"How? What? I don't understand."

"Miss Bird has a shelter under this roof now, and while I live she shall never want a friend," said Mrs. Peters, purposely confirming Rufus Black's impression that Lally was a dependent, "but she has known such extremes of poverty as would make you shudder. She left her lodgings in New Brompton, turned out by an insolent landlady, having only the clothes she stood in. She went out upon Waterloo Bridge in her despair to commit suicide. As it chanced a girl did commit suicide, springing from Lally's very side, and Lally's handkerchief, fluttering after the poor creature, fixed upon her Lally's identity. Lally fled from the terrible scene, and that night she slept upon Hampstead Heath, under the open sky, with tramps and thieves all around her in the darkness, and she knowing it not—homeless, houseless, penniless—"

"Oh, Heaven!" cried Rufus Black, in an uncontrollable agitation.

"You think it terrible for a girl so young and beautiful? Listen. Worse was to come. She went to a poor old seamstress she had known when teaching music in a school. This seamstress gave her shelter and protection, but she was dying of consumption, and Lally had soon to work for her and nurse her, and after a little time to bury her. When the poor woman died Lally was once more homeless and without work. She was nearly starved, and her one great desire was to look upon your face again, horizon unseen. So she wandered down into Kent—"

"Into Kent? Oh, my poor girl!"

"She was ragged and tattered, hungry and forlorn. She worked in the hop-gardens for food and shelter. She saw you—"

Rufus uttered a cry of incredulity.

"She did not see me!" he ejaculated. "I should have known her in any guise. I should have felt her nearness had she been on the opposite side of the street."

Mrs. Peters's lip curled.

"You think so," she said, drily. "Let me tell you that your wronged and deserted young wife was nearer to you than that, and you did not know it. Do you remember a certain September evening when you sat beside the hearse of Hawkhurst upon a way-side bank in the shadow of Hawkhurst Park? Do you remember your passionate vows of love to

Miss Wynde? Do you remember telling Miss Wynde that your very life here and beyond depended upon her answer to your suit? Well, there was one listening to those passionate vows whom you thought dead. In the thicket, almost within an arm's length of you, a poor, worn-out, ragged tramp was lying for a brief rest—a hungry, houseless, tattered tramp, Mr. Black—and that tramp was your disowned young wife!"

"Oh, Heaven! Impossible."

"You passed on with your beautiful new love in all her pride and her beauty, and the old love rose up from her thorny bed and crept after you like a shadow, and when you stood in the light upon the Hawkhurst terrace, with the hand of your new love pressed to your lips, the old love stood outside the great gates a long way off, and with her face against the bars looked in upon you both, as a lost soul might look in upon Paradise."

"Oh, Lally, Lally!" cried Rufus, in a wild anguish, utterly losing his self-control. "Lally! Was she there? My poor, poor darling!"

"When you turned to come back down the avenue she fled moaning. She had seen you and seemed as if she must die. But she was young and strong, and life clung to her, although her heart was breaking. She wandered on for hours, and finally lay down under a way-side hedge. The next day she worked in hop-gardens, and the next night she slept in a barn with the hop-pickers, many of whom are tramps and thieves out of London for a holiday. She earned a little money, and went to Canterbury and advertised for a situation which she obtained—"

"As your companion, madam? May Heaven bless you for your goodness to my poor, forsaken girl! And she lived and suffered while I mourned her as dead! Oh, madam, I can explain all that seems so strange to you and her. I never loved Miss Wynde as I loved Lally. I believed Lally dead, and that I was her murderer. I was consumed with remorse and anguish. I was desperate and going to the bad, and I prayed Miss Wynde to save me. But I loved only Lally. I pray you to let me see her. She will believe me—"

"That is the very reason I shall not permit you to see her. She is getting to take an interest in life, and I will not have her growing peace disturbed. You are engaged to this hoiress—"

"Oh, no, I am not. If I were I would not marry her now that I know that Lally lives. My father threatened me with arrest and imprisonment if I did not give Lally up. He assured me that the marriage was null and void, and that he would provide for my poor girl. I'm a coward, Miss Wroat, a poor, pitiful coward, and I have had all my life long a deadly fear of my father. You cannot understand that fear—perhaps no one can; but I shall fling off that awe and terror of him, and be henceforth my own master. I was one-and-twenty yesterday, madam, and I am now accountable only to Heaven and to the laws of my country. I love Lally, and Lally alone, in all the world. I am going to try to be worthy of her. She is poor, and I am poor; but if she will take me back again," said Rufus, humbly, "we will begin life anew, and I will strive to be a better man. I will work for her, and I'll try to be a great painter, so that she may be proud of me. And if I can't be that I'll be anything that is honest and manly to earn our support. I know you have a poor opinion of me, madam, and I know I deserve it. I don't amount to much from any point of view, but if you would intercede for me with Lally, and beg her to try me again and marry me, I will bless you always as my benefactress and saviour."

The young man's humility and anguished pleading touched the heart of Mrs. Peters, but she steeled herself against him, and said:

"Mr. Black, I am sorry for you. I believe that you mean what you say now, but if you were once to get under your father's influence again Miss Lally would be as unhappy as ever. I advise you to go back to Miss Wynde, and leave Lally here. In time she may marry an honourable and upright gentleman, with whom she will be far happier than she could be with you."

A quick flush of jealousy overspread the youth's face. His eyes glared at Mrs. Peters with a hunted expression.

"She won't marry again until I die, or the law has freed her from me," he exclaimed. "I would never have proposed marriage to Miss Wynde had I not supposed Lally to be dead. She is my wife, madam, and I'll declare her to be such until she herself forbids me to do so. If she should marry any other man I'll kill him!"

The young man's jealous fury was succeeded by an instant and terrible despair.

"Forgive me," he said, humbly. "What am I that I should talk of controlling Lally's movements? I have forfeited all claim upon her, and upon her forgiveness. If she refuse to take me back I can only go to perdition. If she will stretch out her hand to save me I will be her slave. Will you not take a brief message to her from me, madam—only a few words?"

Mrs. Peters fancied she heard a light step in the hall. She listened, but, convinced of her mistake, said, hastily and with nervous agitation:

"I cannot convey your message, sir. I entreat you to leave Miss Bird in peace. I repeat that you cannot see her under this roof."

"How summarily you dispose of the happiness and the very destiny of a fellow being!" said Rufus, despairingly and reproachfully. "I would see her in your presence—"

"You cannot. You have prolonged this interview beyond bounds, sir. Take my advice and go back to Miss Wynde. I must bid you a good-evening, Mr. Black. You can go out at this garden door if you please."

Mrs. Peters threw open the garden door, and a gust of chill wind swept in, nearly extinguishing the light. Rufus hesitated, but the door remained open, and Mrs. Peters looked so grim and stern that he obeyed her without a murmur, and went out in a dead silence, his wild eyes giving her a last look of reproach and despair.

A minute later she heard his cab roll away from the house.

"I wonder if I have done right," the woman muttered uneasily as she closed the door. "I have taken a great responsibility upon myself in deciding the fate of my young mistress. I almost wish that I had let him see her, but she is so young and tender and pitiful she would have been sure to take him back again. His eyes will haunt me. He looked as a man might look on his way to execution."

At that moment the library door was tried from the hall, and an impudent little knock sounded upon the panels.

"Peters," cried Lally from without, in an agitated voice, "let me in, let me in!"

Peters calmed her face and hastened to unlock the door.

Lally swept in impetuously, her gipsy face aglow, her black eyes full of fire, her chest panting. She had in one hand a gentleman's glove, which she had just picked up from the hall floor.

Her keen eyes swept the room, and her countenance fell with disappointment at finding Mrs. Peters alone.

"I heard a carriage go away just now, Peters," she cried. "Who has been here?"

"Was it not the wind, miss?" cried Peters, flushing.

"No; I heard wheels going down the drive. And here is something I found in the hall, Peters—a man's glove. Whose is it?"

"It might be Toppen's, miss—"

"It might be, but it isn't," said Lally, full of suppressed excitement that made her strangely beautiful. "This is a gentleman's glove. See how soft and fine the kid is. The colour is just the shade of lavender Rufus used to wear when he wore gloves, and it has just the jessamine scent he used to drop always into his gloves. And—and here is one of the very glove buttons he used to slip from one pair of gloves to another. I would know that small gold knob, with its chased edge, anywhere. Peters, he has been here! Rufus has been here!"

The flushing, agitated face of Mrs. Peters confessed the truth.

"He has followed us up from London!" cried Lally, her eyes glowing like suns. "He has come after me and traced me to this place. He loves me still—he must love me, Peters! He loves me better than Miss Wynde!"

"He said so, Miss Lally."

"Ah, then, it is true! But why did he go away without seeing me? Why did you not call me? Perhaps he will give up all for me, thinking me still poor like himself?"

"He said he would, Miss Lally," said poor, honest Mrs. Peters, driven to full confession. "He thinks that I am Miss Wroat, and that you are Mrs. Peters, my poor companion. And he says he loves you, and wants to marry you; but he is so unstable and cowardly, and I know you ought to make a grand marriage, with your face and your fortune; and so—and so, Miss Lally, I sent him off, and he's gone back to England and Miss Wynde."

Poor Lally stared at her maid with dilating eyes and horror-stricken countenance. Then she said, in a wailing voice:

"Oh, Peters, you meant well, I know; but—but you've broken my heart!"

With a low, wild moan, Lally fell forward in a dead swoon.

#### CHAPTER XLII.

THAT night upon which Rufus Black visited Heather Hills, and was sent away again in despair, was a wild night throughout Great Britain and upon its coasts.

Ships were wrecked upon the Goodwin Sands, and upon the south and west coasts. Over the open moors and heaths of the country the winds went roaring like unloosed demons, bent upon terrible mischief.

Women with husbands at sea cowered before

their blazing fires that night, and children in their beds snuggled closer and held their breaths with very fear. Houses were unroofed in many places, chimneys were blown down, and lives were lost upon bridges and country roads through falling timbers and uprooted trees.

The gale that night was one long to be remembered for its wild violence, one so severe not having been experienced in Great Britain for years.

Mr. Atkins, the Canterbury solicitor, sat in his office until a late hour that night. His house was in a pleasant, quiet street, in a good neighbourhood, and the lower floor was occupied by him as his office, the drawing-room being upon the second floor, and the family rooms above. The main office had an independent entrance from the street, with a door opening directly into the office—a convenient arrangement duly appreciated by Mrs. Atkins, as it left the house entrance free to her family and guests.

The solicitor had changed somewhat since his first introduction to the reader. His honest face had grown thin and sallow, his hair was streaked with gray, and there were anxious lines about his mouth and eyes that told of unrest and trouble.

He sat in a lounging-chair before the fire, his feet on the fender. His family had long since retired, and the hour was wearier on towards eleven o'clock. His fire flamed up in a wild glow, the gas burned brightly, the red fire gleams lighted the dull office carpet and the well-polished furniture, making the room seem especially cozy and delightful.

The shutters were lowered, but no care could shut out the sound of the mad winds careering through the streets, clutching at resisting outer blinds, and bearing along now and then some clattering sign-board or other estray.

"An awful night," sighed the solicitor. "I have a strange feeling as if something were going to happen!"

He shifted uneasily in his chair, and bent forward and laid fresh coals upon the fire. Then he leaned back again and thought.

The office clock struck eleven, and the load clanger jarred upon Mr. Atkins with singular unpleasantness.

Before the echo of the last stroke had died out footfalls were heard in the street, unsteady and wavering, as if the pedestrian was battling with the storm and found it difficult to advance against it.

"Some poor fellow," thought Mr. Atkins. "He must be homeless to be out at this hour and in such a gale."

The steps came nearer and nearer still, their sound being now and then lost in the tumult of the winds. They paused at the front of the solicitor's office steps, and then slowly mounted to the door.

"Who can it be at this time of night?" muttered Mr. Atkins. "Some vagabond who means to sleep on my steps? Or it is some houseless wanderer who sees my light through the shutters, and has come to beg of me?"

It almost seemed as if it must be the latter, for the office lights did gleam out into the black streets, and lit up a patch of pavement.

A knock, low and unsteady, resounded upon the knocker.

Mr. Atkins hesitated. He was not a timid man, but he had no client who found it necessary to call upon him at that hour, and his visitor, he thought, was as likely to be some desperate vagrant or professional thief as an honest man.

The knock, low and faint and imploring, sounded again.

It seemed to the solicitor as if there was something especially guarded and secret in the manner of it.

He arose and took from his office desk a loaded pistol, and placed it in his breast pocket. Then he went to the door and undid the bars and bolts, throwing it half way open, and peering out.

A man stood upon the steps, muffled in a thick long overcoat, whose fur collar was turned up above his ears. A slouched hat was drawn over his face, and Mr. Atkins could not distinguish a feature of his face.

"Who is it?" asked the solicitor, his hand feeling for his pistol.

"An old friend," was the reply, in a hoarse whisper. "I must see you. Let me in, Atkins."

He stepped forward with an air of command that impressed Atkins, who involuntarily stepped aside, giving the stranger admittance.

The new comer quietly turned the key in the lock.

Atkins clutched his pistol, quietly upon his guard.

"Who are you?" he demanded. "What do you want?"

The stranger took off his hat, revealing the upper portion of a noble head, crowned with grizzled hair

Then slowly he turned down his great-coat collar, and stood before Atkins without disguise, displaying a gradually noble face, with keen blue eyes, a pale bronzed countenance, and sternly set lips above a grey military beard.

Atkins's hand dropped to his side. With a wild and stifled shriek he staggered to a chair, his eyes glaring wildly at the stranger.

"Good Heaven!" he cried, with white lips. "Sir Harold Wynde!"

Sir Harold—for it was indeed he, having returned that day to England, after a prolonged journey from India—smiled his old warm smile, and held out his hand.

"Sir Harold Wynde!" repeated Atkins, not taking the hand—"who—who died—"

"I can give you the best of proofs, Atkins, that I did not die in India," said the baronet, with a cheery little laugh. "You look at me as at a ghost, but I'm no ghost. Feel my hand. Is not that real flesh and blood?" Atkins, you are giving me but a sorry welcome, my old friend."

Atkins still stared with a wild incredulity at his old friend and employer. He could not yet comprehend the glad truth.

"I—I must be dreaming," he muttered. "I felt queer to night. I—"

Sir Harold advanced, and, pulling off his glove, laid his hand on that of Atkins. Its touch was chill, but unmistakably human.

"What!" cried the baronet. "Do you believe in ghosts, my friend? I wouldn't have believed a bona-fide wraith could have so startled the hard-headed Atkins I once knew. I was not eaten by the tiger, Atkins, but I have been kept a prisoner in the hands of human tigers until I managed to escape last month. You know me now and that I am no ghost?"

Atkins rose up, pale and trembling still, but with an unutterable joy on his face.

"It is Sir Harold, alive and in the flesh!" he ejaculated—"Sir Harold whom we mourned as dead. This is a miracle!"

He clasped the baronet's hand, and laughed and cried in a breath. He seemed overflowing with his great joy.

The baronet held the trembling hand of his friend in a strong, restful pressure for some minutes, during which not a word was spoken between them.

Their hearts were full.

"I am not myself to-night, Sir Harold," said Atkins, brokenly, when he had regained his voice. "I have been upset lately."

He drew Sir Harold toward the fire, helped him off with his great-coat, and encooed him in a long-chair before the fender.

Then he drew a chair close beside the baronet's, and asked, tremulously:

"Have you been to Hawkhurst yet, Sir Harold?"

"No, not yet. You could not think I would leave home again so soon, if I had gone thither? I only landed in England to-day, coming through France. I am a week over due. I arrived in Canterbury an hour ago, and as soon as I had food I came to you. I saw your light through the shutters, but if I had not seen it I should have rapped you up in my impatience. I want you to go with me to Hawkhurst, to break the news that I still live to my wife and my daughter. My appearance shocked you nearly into apoplexy. I must not appear unannounced to them."

Mr. Atkins trembled, and covered his face with his hand.

"You would go to-night—in this storm?" he asked.

"Yes, yes. What is the storm to me? Only a few miles divide me from my home and loved ones. And I shall see them before I sleep. Oh, Atkins, how I have looked forward to this hour of my home coming! I have yearned for it during the days and nights when I lay chained in an Indian hut among the Himalayas; I have thought of it when pacing the lonely deck at midnight under the stars. I have prayed for this hour as the crowning joy of my life. Almost home! It seems as if my soul would burst with rapture. My home! My wife! My child! The sweetest, holiest words in our language!"

The baronet's face glowed with a joyous radiance.

Atkins was sick at heart.

"I have been careful that no hint of my return as from the dead should arrive before me," continued Sir Harold. "I came home under the name of Harold Hunlow. Only Major Archer and his family, besides yourself, know that I still live. At the hotel I registered the name of Hunlow, and not one but a new waiter I had never seen before saw my face. The surprise of my family will be complete. Come, Atkins, let us be off. I have a cab waiting at the hotel."

"I—I wouldn't go to-night, Sir Harold," said Atkins, feebly.

Something in his tones alarmed the baronet.

"Why not?" he demanded. "I—I have taken

it for granted that they are all well at home. Octavia—Neva—how are they? Speak!"

Atkins arose, twisting his hands nervously together.

"His pallor frightened Sir Harold, who arose also. "What is it?" he whispered. "They—they are not dead?"

"No, Sir Harold—no!"

"Thank Heaven! You frightened me, Atkins; I can bear anything now that I know they are alive. What has happened? They have not met with an accident? Don't tell me, Atkins, that my wife—my beautiful young wife—is insane through grief at my supposed death?"

Atkins groaned aloud.

"No, no," he said, grating his teeth, and clutching his hands. "It is not that."

"What is it then? Speak, for Heaven's sake; the suspense is killing me!"

"I have bad news for you, Sir Harold," said the solicitor, tremblingly. "Let me give you a glass of wine—"

Sir Harold clutched the solicitor's arm, his burning eyes fixed upon his friend's face.

"Speak!" he said, hoarsely.

"I will if you will sit down."

Sir Harold dropped silently into his chair.

"Lady Wynde," said Atkins; "Lady Wynde—how can I speak the words to you who love her so, Sir Harold?—he has married again!"

Every vestige of colour died from the baronet's face, and he lay back upon his chair fainting.

Atkins ran for water and brandy; he bathed Sir Harold's face, and chafed his hands, and poured brandy down his throat, the tears on his own cheeks.

Presently Sir Harold gasped for breath, and looked up at him with a dazed and stunned expression.

"Say that over again, Atkins," he said, feebly. "I don't quite understand."

"I said, Sir Harold," said the solicitor, every word giving him a pang, "that Lady Wynde has married again."

Sir Harold gave a strange cry, and covered his face with his hands.

"Don't take it so, Sir Harold," cried Atkins. "You've had a happy escape from her. She's a heartless, unprincipled—"

Sir Harold put up his hand.

"Don't!" he said, pleadingly. "You hurt me, Atkins. She thought me dead, my poor Octavia. Who—whom did she marry?"

"A gambler and adventurer named Craven Black. During the past month, Sir Harold, I have devoted much time to the study of Mrs. Craven Black's antecedents. Forgive me, Sir Harold, but in this hour you must know all the truth. I am like the surgeon who cuts deeply to extract a ball. Sir Harold, the woman you married was never fit to be placed as step-mother and guardian over an artless young girl—"

"Atkins, she is my wife. Mine still, although another claims her. I will not hear a word against her."

"You must hear it, Sir Harold," said Atkins, resolutely. "If you do not hear it from me, others less kind will pour it into your ears. You cannot escape the knowledge. As I said, during the past month I have studied Lady Wynde's antecedents. I have seen Mrs. Hyde, Lady Wynde's aunt, and I have also seen a former maid of her ladyship. I tell you, Sir Harold—and I pray you to forgive me for telling you the truth—the woman you married never loved you. She married you only as a part of a daring conspiracy—"

"Atkins!"

"It is true, as Heaven is my witness!" cried Atkins, solemnly. "Lady Wynde—I suppose she is Lady Wynde still, her last marriage being rendered invalid by your return to the living, as one might say—Lady Wynde was engaged to marry Craven Black before she ever saw you. Mrs. Hyde told me this herself."

"I cannot believe it!"

"Craven Black was poor, and so was Octavia Hathaway. You were at Brighton, rich, a widower. Craven Black conceived the idea that Octavia should win and wed you, and secure a rich jointure, upon which, in due time, having rid themselves of you, they should marry—"

"This is monstrous! Atkins, you are deceived. You are belying a noble woman!"

"Hear the rest, Sir Harold. As Heaven is my judge, I believe your wife married you intending to poison you!"

Sir Harold shook his head. The idea seemed too monstrous for belief.

"That affair in the water at Brighton was planned beforehand," persisted Atkins. "You rescued the lady, as was expected of you. She followed up the acquaintance, and married you. You went to India, and I believe if you had not gone you would have died here suddenly of poison. When Lady Wynde

had worn mourning a year in most decorous fashion Craven Black and his son came to Wyndham, and early in September there were great festivities at Hawkhurst, at the third marriage of Lady Wynde. There was a ball at the great house, and ball for the tenantry on the lawn, with music and fireworks. It was for all the world an affair such as might have greeted the coming of age of an heir to a grand property rather than the marriage of a widow from the house of her late husband to a notorious adventurer."

Sir Harold groaned heavily.

"And they are at Hawkhurst now?" he said, in a voice so altered that Atkins hardly recognized it.

"No; they have been away for a month."

"You understand that all these charges are not proved against Lady Wynde," said Sir Harold. "I shall take my wife back again, Atkins, if she will come, and I will stand between her and the censure of a gossiping world."

"Did you write from India the night before you disappeared, enjoining your daughter by her love for you to marry the son of Craven Black?" demanded Atkins, abruptly.

"No; how should I? I don't know Craven Black, nor his son."

Atkins went to his desk, and took out a letter.

"Read that, Sir Harold," he said, returning and presenting it to the baronet. "Lady Wynde gave that letter to Miss Wynde, telling her it was your last letter to your daughter, written upon the eve of your supposed death."

Sir Harold read the letter to the very end, an awful sternness gathering on his countenance. The tender epithets by which he had called his daughter, his particular modes of speech, and his own phraseology, in that skilfully forged letter, staggered him.

"I never wrote it," he said, briefly. "It is a forgery!"

"Of course. I knew that. But Lady Wynde gave it to Miss Neva, declaring it to be your last letter."

"Who is this Rufus Black?"

"A weak-souled, kindly young fellow, the son of a villain, and a ready instrument in the hands of his father. He loves Miss Neva, and proposed to her. She, however, loves Lord Towny—"

"Lord Towny! My old college-mate?"

"No; his son, Arthur, has come into the title and property, and is as noble a young man as any in England. Miss Neva favoured him, and the result is, Lady Wynde and Craven Black conceived a hatred of your daughter, and determined to bind her to their will. Sir Harold, as Heaven is above us, Lady Wynde is a wicked, unscrupulous woman."

Sir Harold's face was deathly white.

The letter, still held in his trembling hands, was proof of his wife's wickedness, and he began to be convinced that he had been cruelly deceived by an unprincipled woman.

"It would have been better if I had died in India!" he moaned.

"Not so, Sir Harold, there is more to hear. Can you bear another blow?"

Sir Harold bowed; he was too heartbroken to speak.

"A month ago, Lady Wynde, with her new husband, and Miss Wynde, went away, ostensibly to Wyndham Heights. But they did not go thither. A letter came from Brussels to Lord Towny, purporting to be from Miss Wynde, but Lord Towny went to Brussels, and discovered that the young lady and her enemies had not been there. We have had detectives at work for weeks; Lord Towny is searching day and night, scarcely knowing rest, and I have done all that I could, but the fact remains. Craven Black and his wife abducted Miss Wynde, and Heaven alone, besides her enemies, knows where she is."

The baronet leaped to his feet.

"Neva missing!" he cried.

"Yes, Sir Harold, missing for a month past, and she is in the hands of enemies who would not scruple to take her life if they could hope to make money by her death. We have searched Great Britain for her, and have detectives at this moment upon the Continent. She is gone—lost! Her enemies have determined to force her into a marriage with Rufus Black, and to seize upon her property. She is helpless in their hands. You have returned in time to help search for her, but I am hopeless. We shall never find her except when she is dead, or married to the son of that villain!"

Sir Harold was about to speak, but his utterance was choked. He leaned against his chair, looking like one dying.

At that juncture, while the wind tore yet more madly through the streets, footsteps were heard ascending to the street door of the office, and for the second time that night the office knocker sounded lowly, secretly, and cautiously, yet with an impetuosity that commanded an instant admittance.

(To be continued.)



[THE FIRST PERIL.]

## IN PERIL.

"Oh, dear me!"

No wonder Rose Ray stopped short, for, in making a short cut through the shrubbery of Laurel Waters, she had nearly run over a young man lying half asleep under a bush.

Rose stopped short, her hat on her neck, her eyes wide with amazement—her mouth, too, I am afraid—and both her slender hands held up in involuntary alarm.

David Knight sat up on the short green grass and rumped his already tousled hair.

"I beg your pardon," stammered Rose. "I didn't know any one was here."

"I beg your pardon," said David. "I didn't mean to be in any one's way."

He raised up his tall, well-made figure, and kicked aside his hat, book, and dog, to make way for Rose's passage.

"Oh, don't do so!" she cried, but he took no notice, and having drawn aside the boughs of an intercepting linden tree he stood deferentially waiting for her to pass.

She was so petite, he was so tall and shaggy and broad-shouldered in his rich dress, that it was a sight worth seeing.

"Thank you. Good-morning!" said Rose, tripping along.

He watched her pink cambric dress as long as there was a glimmer of it to be seen, and then cast himself down upon the ground again.

"Nonsense! she'd never think of me," he said, pulling his beard, and scowling in his whimsical fashion. "Rose, Rose—little Rose Ray."

His eyes were so bright and brown and tender under their shaggy brows that it was a pity there was no one to see them but a robin in the linden and a field mouse peeping from the edge of the path. Czar, the old hound, had gone off in high dudgeon.

Meanwhile Rose hurried along at the edge of the river, her young face lovelier far than the clusters of laurel bloom that bent down to her all the way.

"David Knight—what a queer fellow he is! So tall and shaggy and awkward!—blushing like a girl if he's looked at!—and he the master of Laurel Waters! Pa says he's the richest man in the county! Why doesn't he brush his hair and get a wife? I suppose there are some folks who would have him. Oh, this path is full of slugs! I wish I'd gone the other way."

Having cast David from her mind, Rose applied herself to avoiding the slugs. She was going to meet her father, who had been in town all night, but was expected by the ten-o'clock train.

As soon as she reached the road she saw him walking slowly, his head down.

"Papa!" she called, gaily.

Her father looked up—looked down again. When she came to his side and took his arm she saw that his manner was unnatural and strange.

"Why, papa, what has happened?"

"I've lost—money, everything!" cried Mr. Ray, in a burst of anguish.

Rose was too shocked to speak.

"Well, papa, dear," she said, at last, "you know we never were very rich, and it can't make much difference."

"I am sixty years old," exclaimed Mr. Ray, not heeding her. "Aged, tired! I can't make another competence for my family. I—"

He stopped and looked wild towards the water.

Rose was thankful to get him safe home. After he had retired to his room and had gone to bed, she ran up and down stairs with ice water, and valerian, and hot tea, begging little Lily to look after the baby until she could attend to him. For Rose's stepmother had been dead a year, and Rose kept house for her papa and stepsister and brother at Clematis Cottage.

This was the second time Mr. Ray had failed. As

he said, he was old, and he was discouraged and quite desperate.

The saddest of all was that their little home must be sold. That cut Rose to the heart. If they could only keep together and have a home their trouble would be less hard to bear.

But Lily's grandmother offered to take her and little Ned; they would go—the dear little girl and the baby—and her father would find some petty office to toil at, while they went into lodgings in town.

Rose wept passionately when alone, but she kept a cheerful face before her father, and tried persistently to see a way out of their troubles.

Miss Martha Sedley sat in her wheeled chair on the terrace one forenoon, when a little demure figure glided along the distant paths and slowly approached the house. Miss Martha was looking at the peacocks on the lawn, and did not see it.

Miss Martha had a club foot, and could not walk very well. She had also a frightful birthmark on the side of her face. One would have pitied her, but her thin, sneering mouth and malicious gray eyes frightened all tender emotions from her presence.

Everybody was afraid of her, she was so ingeniously cruel. She studied to hurt people, to wound their feelings, humble them, and arouse wicked passions that made them hate themselves. She was an adept at this. Without an effort she kept every one about her miserable.

Never, perhaps, was a more disagreeable household. The cook was snappish, the housemaid sulky, the gardener surly, David Knight, her cousin, painfully shy and distrustful of himself. And it was all Miss Martha Sedley's doing. Yet she had an interesting manner, and was strangely agreeable when she chose to be.

She had been engaged to marry a very superior man once, people said, but she contrived to make him so angry with her that he went away and never came back again.

She looked now to be forty years old. She had pale gray eyes and large bony hands. She was always richly dressed, and Laurel Waters was her home as well as David Knight's. His father had promised in his will that Martha was always to live there.

You would certainly have thought her the mistress and David a dependent. You would have thought so from Martha's manner, from David's, and from the servants'.

Yet the servants loved their master, and would go to no end of trouble to please him. Though they waited upon Miss Sedley faithfully, they every one hated her.

Joseph, who used to wash her poodle every morning, secretly thumped the overfed, wheezing little monster's head, as some slight expression of his sentiments for Fancy's mistress.

Miss Martha Sedley watched the peacocks, while Rose Ray, in a gray dress and with a rather pale face, came along the paths of Laurel Waters under the limes and chestnuts. At length she began crossing the lawn, and then Martha saw her.

Rose did not look as pretty as usual. Gray was not as becoming to her as pink, and, though she had wiped away the tears she had indulged in as she came along her eyes were red and heavy. In short, she looked as most people do who are unhappy and full of care. Her eyes were bent on the ground, and she hardly saw Miss Sedley until she was close to her upon the terrace.

"Miss Sedley," she said, directly.

Martha bowed.

"I have heard that you wanted a companion. I have come to—to talk with you."

"Kitty," said Miss Sedley to the servant in waiting, "bring the young lady a chair."

Care and secret weeping had worn upon Rose's strength. She sank into the proffered chair with a sigh of relief.

"May I ask your name?" said Miss Sedley, politely.

Then Rose began telling about herself—all that had happened to them, and what it was necessary for her to do.

"We have a very faithful maid, Dorah. She is kind to the children, and they are fond of her. She would take care of them and keep house for papa while I was away, thus relieving papa of my living, and earning something towards buying back our little home. If I were to come to you, Miss Sedley, it's only a mile away, and I could see them often."

Miss Sedley could not help smiling at Rose's ingenuousness. It was amusing to see how unfitted she was for a wily courtier. She made no attempt at flattering Miss Sedley; did not pretend that the service would be a pleasure; stated frankly that she wished to come from necessity. It was, indeed, most entertaining to listen and look at her, with her small, serious face and little plain gray dress.

Miss Sedley was entertained and interested. Some people would have been sympathetic. She was not in the least. But she saw instantly how useful such an honest little soul as Rose would be. Her servants all deceived her. She seldom found it out—they did it too well for that—but there was no doubt that they could not be trusted. She saw instantly that Rose would do her duty, and she congratulated herself on finding a treasure.

Then she thought of David.

She had made her great, generous, noble-hearted cousin so self-distrustful and shy that he never spoke to a woman unless he was obliged to; but if she took this girl into the house, where he would be sure to meet her a dozen times a day, what would the result be?

Rose, with heavy eyes, and an absent, worried face, was looking down the garden. No, she was not pretty—a commonplace, dull little thing—thought Miss Sedley; David would never think of her.

"I think we may make the arrangement, Miss Ray. I need some one to read to me, and I seldom walk much."

Miss Sedley never referred more directly to her deformed foot. She then named the salary which Rose would receive, and the amount made Rose, accustomed to limited means, open her eyes very widely.

Rose walked away towards home at last, buoyant and energetic. She had done something to help matters. She thought she could see quite clearly now their way out of their difficulty. But it gave her heart a pang as she thought of her father's worn face turned to the wall upstairs, and the two little children huddled together in their loneliness, awaiting her return. She stopped on the stone step, outside the door, under the clematis vine, and gave a little sob.

Just then the door flew open, and David Knight rushed out, nearly knocking her down. He was saying something to Dorah, but stopped short, with a gasp, and then pulled off his hat, muttered something, and hurried out of the yard. Rose smiled a little, for Dorah was smiling too.

"Well now, but for being a bit shy, he's the nicest gentleman in the world," said Dorah.

"Whom did he come to see?"

"Your father, miss. An' he's chirked him up wonder."

Rose ran upstairs.

"Papa, Mr. Knight has been here. What could he want?"

Old Mr. Ray actually smiled.

"He's offered me a very nice situation as his secretary, Rose. Only three hours in the office a day, from eleven till two. The salary is excellent. I think, my dear, that I'll get up."

With this good news there was hardly need of Rose's going away, but for the buying back of their little house. But it was easier now to go.

Dorah entered joyously into the plan, and her father thought he could spare her, and said so, not with his late air of dreary resignation, but cheerfully. "In a year, you know, papa, we shall own Clematis Cottage again."

That was the goal she was to look forward to in her exile. And her mind had grown reanimated by finding a friend, so that the world looked much brighter.

David Knight she hadn't given a thought to before. But now she planned to thank him when she saw him at Laurel Waters—to tell him how much help his kindness was to them, etc. She began, innocently, to count upon him as a companion at Laurel Waters.

That very first day at dinner Miss Sedley found out that Rose was pretty. She discovered it, first, by following the direction of her cousin David's eyes as Rose ate her dinner. The girl had on a simple black silk dress and a cluster of pink laurel in her dark braids.

Miss Sedley saw, but said nothing. Rose was looking lovely, and she smiled on David when he paled her peach for her, and showed not the least fear of Miss Sedley. The poor girl never had comprehended that there could be a nature as wicked as Miss Martha Sedley's, and she did not know that there was anything to fear or be chilled by.

Miss Sedley always took a nap after dinner, and at four o'clock Rose went in and read to her.

As soon as she reached her chamber that day her conduct was most extraordinary. She clenched her sharp white teeth as she sank into a chair, and clenched her hands also. Then she caught up a rod, and beat the little dog Fancy, who had followed her in, his blue ribbon trailing on the ground. Finally she cast herself across the foot of the bed, and lay as still as if asleep. But she was not asleep. She was thinking.

"Ah, what an idiot I have been! The girl is charming. Why did I not see before what I see so well now, and what David sees? How happy he looked

waiting upon her. His smiles infuriate me. It shall not be! He shall not fall in love with this girl. She shall not be his wife. He shall marry me! But what can I do? I cannot send her away now—he would surely go after her. I would like to set her clothes on fire, and cover her with scars. I will kill her before she shall come between me and him."

The long summer hours crept by, and Miss Sedley in her rich, tumbled dinner dress lay across the silken coverlid of her luxurious bed, her gray eyes wide set, her breath coming quickly, and the repulsive birthmark upon her cheek as red as fire.

A maid came into the room softly, laid some lace in a drawer and tiptoed out again. But Miss Sedley was not asleep. By-and-bye Rose's light knock came at the door.

Then Miss Sedley sprang up, tore off her silk dress, pulled on a wrapper, and sat down in an easy-chair, taking up Fancy, who lay shivering and whining on his cushion, as she bade Rose come in.

If Miss Sedley had known that the girl had just come from the garden, where she had been walking with David Knight, and thanking him for his assistance to her poor father, she would have hated her more than ever.

Rose seated herself on a tabouret, and took up the novel with which Miss Sedley whiled away the dull hours of her existence.

"No," said Miss Sedley; "pray talk to me instead of reading. How do you like Laurel Waters?—the house and grounds, I mean."

"They are beautiful! If we could have such a home, papa and I, I should be quite happy," said Rose, innocently.

"It has always been my home. We never enjoy very much, I suppose, that to which we have been always accustomed. I would like a Chinese pagoda on the lawn, and a south hedge. There are several changes I shall have made when we are married, my cousin David and I."

Rose opened wide her blue eyes.

Miss Sedley spoke quite carelessly, then she said: "I did not mean to tell you—you will not speak of it, of course."

"Certainly not," Rose murmured.

"I have been engaged to my cousin for over a year," said Miss Sedley. "It was his father's wish. But we keep our affairs to ourselves; we do not like to be gossiped about. David is particularly averse to it. You will not of course allow him to suspect that you are aware of our engagement."

"Oh, no!" cried Rose, secretly wondering why Miss Sedley had not herself been more careful of her precious secret.

"I think now you might read for awhile," said Miss Sedley.

Rose turned over the leaves of the book, conscious of feeling quite shocked. How any one could love Miss Sedley, with her thin lips and her deformities, she did not see; and marriage without love was something she had never contemplated. But she was sweet tempered and tender hearted; she would not have intimated such a thing for the world. Miss Sedley watched her closely as she sat finding her place. Her green eyes glittered under their narrow lids, and little Fancy shivered and whined upon her knee.

Summer passed and autumn ended. Rose's sunny temper had grown overshadowed. She had begun to know Miss Sedley. Only begun, I say, for it would have taken a lifetime to quite comprehend that wilful woman, and a very unfortunate experience it would be in the end.

Rose had begun by being shy of David. She puzzled over him and wondered at him after she heard that he was engaged to Miss Sedley. He must be strangely insensible and stupid to ally himself to such ugliness and coldness. Her manner, which had at first been so sweet and frank, became icy, and David was cast into the depths of despair.

The days and weeks crept by. Rose chided herself for being unhappy. She told herself that she had not come there for enjoyment, and then applied herself to her duties with renewed diligence, and tried to be content.

It smote her to the heart the first time she became convinced that Miss Sedley had not the slightest sympathy with her longing to visit her father's home, and would never take any pains to give her a holiday in which so natural a desire could be gratified.

Why, she had taken it for granted that Miss Sedley knew how hard it was to leave her dear papa, and was sorry for her—the unsophisticated child! Poor little Rose was learning her first hard lessons of the world.

She had a headache one morning. The heavy scent of musk in Miss Sedley's private rooms made her quite ill. She was inexpressibly relieved when Miss Sedley dismissed her, and, hastily putting up the disagreeable book, she ran down out of the house, into the garden.

The leaves lay black in the paths—the trees were bare—the wind blew in damp gusts along the avenues. The scene was forbidding—all the place dreary and unhomelike. Rose pulled her red riding-hood over her head and burst out crying. She wanted to go home so!—to hang upon her dear papa's neck, to embrace Neddy, and frolic with Lily! Oh, she could not stay at Laurel Waters! she should die.

In her great luxury of weeping, standing under a tree, she suddenly heard a long, deep sigh. She looked up, and David Knight was standing before her, regarding her with the most profound compassion.

"Miss Ray," he said, in a gentle voice, "are you unhappy too?"

"If," said Rose, quite thrown off her balance, in a voice of indignation. "Why not?"

"But you do not belong to this ill-fated family," said David, sadly; "you can go away and leave us at any time."

"No, I cannot," said Rose, truthfully. "My duty is here."

"When you first came," said David, after a pause, "it seemed to be a beautiful fortune which had come to me. It was cruel almost."

"What do you mean?" said Rose, curiously, looking at him with her eyes full of tears.

"I loved you," said David, simply; "and I thought you were going to love me."

"But you—you are engaged to your cousin!" said Rose, opening wide her blue eyes.

David stared at her for a moment.

"Who told you that?"

"She did."

"It is not true."

He looked very much annoyed and perplexed, and quite forgot to be awkward.

Rose looked at his tall, strong figure, his shaggy beard, his mouth of wonderful sweetness, his kind eyes, and the sudden and unexpected conviction that she could love him quite frightened her.

"I must go in," she said, huddling her little shoulders under the red cap of her hood. "Miss Sedley will want me."

"No, she won't," said David; "she never wants you at this time in the day. Walk down the avenue with me a little way, please; I want to tell you something."

Rose hesitated, but went. A bird dropped silently from the tree over their heads and accompanied them.

"I have always lived here at Laurel Waters," said David Knight. "The estate has been in the family for several hundred years, you know, perhaps. My father, his father before him, all the family have been very proud. I do not know why I am not like them," he said, meditatively.

Rose glanced up at the downcast thoughtful eyes, the pale, pure cheek, the dress fine and fragrant, and then remembering David Knight's father, with his red face, wheezing voice, and loud, jockey-like habiliments, she thought that the present owner of Laurel Waters had something better than pride.

"I have my land to look after, and I try to do a little good in my day and generation," said David, quietly. "But I have always been a solitary man. The blessing of a wife and children has somehow eluded me. I try not to feel lonely and sad, but sadness haunts me."

It was strange to hear this confession coming from this silent man. Rose could hardly believe her ears. He went on, with the same simplicity:

"You, dear little girl! always had a charm for me. When you came here, into my great, gloomy house, all my heart went out to you. Suddenly you frowned on me. You don't know how cruel that was."

He stopped. Rose looked at the silent bird flitting from shrub to shrub just before them; her heart was thumping heavily in her breast. Presently he continued:

"Why don't you like me, Rose? Is it because I am awkward and stupid?"

"You are not stupid!" cried Rose, her voice full of tears. "But I thought you loved Miss Sedley, and—*and* I did not know what to make of you."

A sudden illumination went over David Knight's face. He caught Rose's hands.

"Why, Rose, would you?" he cried.

"Yes," said Rose, telling the truth in spite of herself, and nestling out of the chill to the warmth of his breast, "I could love you dearly!"

The silent black-bird gave a loud chirp, and darted out of sight.

Rose entered the house bewildered and happy. As she ran lightly up the antique stairs she heard some one on the upper landing hurrying before her. As she reached her room she caught a glimpse of a black dress which she knew belonged to Assunta, Miss Sedley's wily Italian attendant.

"Assunta!" she called—but there came no answer.

Rose did not heed, for the old woman was whimsical. She went into her room, threw off her wraps, looked at her glowing roses in the mirror, and was too happy to think. Right in her path she had found a great treasure while she had been fretting and longing to leave it. "What if I had gone away and never found him out?" she said to herself, and then she fell on her knees by her little white bed, and thanked Heaven for its goodness.

Now old Assunta was jealous of Rose. She was guilty of having cheated her mistress many times, and, though Miss Sedley had never accused her of stealing her rings and tearing her laces out of spite, Assunta knew she had lost confidence in her, and preferred Rose instead. So she hated the young girl from the bottom of her dark Italian heart.

But for weeks she made no sign of what she had discovered. She contented herself with watching Rose's face from the corners of her deep black eyes, and shaking her head as she stood behind her mistress combing her hair. She bided her time until one cold winter's night.

David had gone away on business.

Miss Sedley had been ill—had been confined to her chamber for weeks. She did not suspect what all the servants were talking about—that Mr. David was going to marry Miss Rose. Mistress Assunta found it time to play her hand.

Miss Sedley rang the dressing-bell at half past nine. It was a quarter to twelve before the old attendant came out of her mistress's rooms.

The next morning Martha Sedley stood gazing at herself in the mirror. Her complexion was actually green. She had not slept all night—not a wink. She had spent the hours hating Rose and making her desperate scheme.

"Baffled, balked, are you, Martha Sedley?" she said to her hideous face in the mirror. "We shall see. They don't know me yet, those two, though they shrink and shiver at every turn. She soon learned to fear me—audacious idiot, with her baby dimples and wide blue eyes! David I broke in long ago. They shall see I am still to rule, and for ever, while I live at Laurel Waters. He shall not marry her. I will prevent it."

She faced her grim, cruel reflection for a moment in silence. She looked like a fiend.

By-and-by she rang for Assunta. The old woman came, and Miss Sedley's toilet was made without hardly a word passing between them. Assunta knew her mistress's moods well. So she dressed the club foot, brushed the scant hair, powdered one cheek, rouged the other, and spoke never a word.

The sun, shining in at the window, dazzled among the diamonds on Miss Sedley's hands as she sipped her chocolate.

"You may send Miss Ray to me," she said, at last.

So Assunta, with a malicious sparkle in her eyes, called Rose, and Rose came, and Assunta took up her position outside the door to overhear what passed.

She hung about all day, and heard not a word that was not as ordinary as could be.

All day the sun shone and the ice sparkled and dripped.

At noon, overcome by the warmth of Miss Sedley's chamber and the heavy scent of musk, Rose fell asleep in her chair. Martha Sedley lifted her baneful eyes and looked at her.

Rose's head hung forward, her cheek pillowed against the velvet back of the chair, her red mouth smiling, her white hands loosely locked on her lap.

Miss Sedley softly drew a steel bodkin from her work-box.

"I could drive it into one of those white temples, and she would never speak again," she thought.

But she put it up, and soon Rose woke, begged pardon for sleeping, and took up the tiresome book again.

The long, lonesome day came to an end at last. The sun began to go down redly in the West. Rose stood looking wistfully from a window, when Miss Sedley said:

"You may go home to-night if you would like, Miss Ray."

Rose started with delight. It was six weeks since she had seen her father and the children.

"Thank you—thank you!" she cried. "I will go immediately; and I must hurry, it is getting dark."

She ran up to her room, and got out wraps.

"Oh, Assunta!" she said to that old woman, "I am going home to-night."

Assunta trotted along, muttering, and made no reply.

Rose, full of eagerness, dressed hurriedly. As I have said, the sun was going down, and, as Miss Sedley had not offered to provide the carriage, Rose must walk, and the distance was a mile by the direct road.

When she came downstairs Martha Sedley stood in the lower hall. She looked at her watch.

"It is nearly six, Miss Ray. The river is frozen. You would get home sooner if you went across on the ice."

Assunta, at her elbow, opened her mouth to speak, but her mistress gave her a look that silenced her.

"Yes, thank you! I think I will," said Rose, tripping away.

Assunta, with a pale cheek, shrank aside, and counted her beads; but Miss Sedley, with an unmoved front, went to her chamber.

Rose ran away to the lake. The ice glimmered and glittered in the twilight.

"It is much the shortest way, but will it bear?" she said, with a natural caution.

She tried it at the edge with her little foot; it appeared firm; she ventured on a few steps, and then commenced running gaily along.

She was too full of other thoughts to remember how the sun had shone all day, slowly but surely thinning the icy coating of the river. But Miss Sedley thought. Assunta, too, knew it.

Rose was twenty rods from the shore she had left when there came an ominous crack. She stopped with dilating eyes. After a moment she ventured on again. She would have gone back if she had not feared danger also in that direction. Proceeding slowly, she saw now, to her dismay, that the ice was covered with water.

With white lips and a throbbing heart she stepped slowly and softly onward, thankful for every step accomplished safely; sorry, oh, so sorry, that she had come that way.

Poor child! There was a bending and cracking as she unconsciously neared the perilous point—a crash, as the ice broke into a hundred pieces beneath her feet, and she went down into the deep, black, chill current.

A horseman, travel-stained, tired, riding along the heavy road, heard a piercing scream of terror. Did he know the voice? That he could not tell you to this day, but he put spur to his jaded animal, and came dashing down to the water's side. But somehow he knew what had happened. For that matter, he could see the cracked ice and the black gulf ahead. He knew that some one had gone down there—he knew, with a maddened heart, who that some one was.

"Rose! Rose!" he shouted.

Merciful Heaven! he heard a cry in return, faint, silvery, pitiful. She was clinging to the edge of the ice, submerged to the breast in the freezing water. She was alive—and after periling his own life—that, oh, so gladly!—he saved her.

He wrapped her in his cloak and galloped home.

"Mary! Margaret! Joan! Come here and take care of your mistress!" he shouted. "Dare you show your sinful face to me?" he cried to his cousin—"you who sent her across the river, and to death? Murderess! did you think I would submit to this?"

The maids gladly gathered about Rose. There was no doubt now that David was the master of Laurel Waters. All hastened to obey him, to serve Rose, to cry out fearlessly against Martha Sedley.

Mad, despairing, wicked spirit that was hers, she went back to her rooms, white faced but for the crimson mark across one cheek, and Assunta saw her lift a glass and drain it to the dregs. She did not know that it was poison until Miss Sedley did not answer on her pillow, next morning, and was—dead!

After being ill Rose recovered and married David Knight. Her days of toil and sacrifice for those she loved were over. To her old father David was a tender son. At Laurel Waters the little ones came up like flowers in the sun. A golden-haired baby daughter shouts to David "Papa, papa!"

E. S. K.

#### MARRIAGE

Men and women, and especially young people, do not know that it takes years to marry completely two hearts, even the most loving and well assured. But nature allows no sudden change. We slope very gradually from the cradle to the summit of life.

Marriage is gradual, a fraction of us at a time. A happy wedlock is a long falling in love. I know young persons think love belongs only to the brown hair, and plump, round, crimson cheeks. But the golden marriage is a part of love which the bridal day knows nothing of. Youth is the tassel and silken flower of love, age is the full corn, ripe and solid in the ear. Beautiful is the morning of love, with its prophetic crimson, violet, purple, and gold, with its hopes of days that are to come. Beautiful also is the evening of love, with its glad remembrances and its rainbow side turned toward heaven as well as earth.

Young people marry their opposites in temper and general character, and such a marriage is commonly a good match. They do it instinctively. The young man does not say, "My black eyes require to be wed with blue, and my over-vehement requires to be a little modified with some-

what of dulness and reserve." When these opposites come together to be wed they do not know it; each thinks the other just like itself.

Old people never marry their opposites; they marry their similars, and from calculation. Each of these two arrangements is very proper. In their long journey these two young opposites will fall out by the way a great many times, and both get out of the road; but each will charm the other back again, and by-and-bye they will be agreed as to the place they will go to and the road they will go by, and become reconciled. The man may be nobler and larger for being associated with so much humanity unlike himself, and she will be a nobler woman for having manhood beside her that seeks to correct her deficiencies and supply her with what she lacks, if the diversity be not too great, and there be real pity and love in their hearts to begin with. The old bridegroom, having much shorter journey to make, must associate himself with one like himself. A perfect and complete marriage is, perhaps, scarce as perfect personal beauty. Men and women are married fractionally; now a small fraction, then a large fraction. Very few are married totally, and they are, we think, after some forty or fifty years of gradual approach and experiment. Such a large and sweet fruit is a complete marriage that it needs a very long summer to ripen in, and then a long winter to mellow and season it. But a real, happy marriage of love and judgment between a noble man and woman, is one of the things so very handsome that if the sun were, as the Greek poets fabled, a god, he might stop the world in order to feast his eyes on such a spectacle.

#### FACETIE

"Is your house a warm one, landlord?" asked a gentleman in search of a house. "It ought to be," was the reply. "The painter gave it two coats recently."

A CHAP who dwells up above the eaves-trough imperceptibly remarks that although the naturalists make no mention of India-rubber birds he has seen doves that were gutta-percha.

"WHAT are you doing there?" inquired Jack of Tom as he caught him peering through the keyhole. "What's that to you?" said Tom; "I don't like to see a person prying into other people's business."

As a wife was holding her husband's aching head in her hands one morning she asked: "Are man and his wife one?" "I suppose so," said the husband. "Then," rejoined the wife, "I came home drunk last night, and ought to be ashamed of myself."

ART received rather an awkward criticism from a young country bumpkin who recently met a sculptor in a social circle and addressed him thus: "Er—er—so you are the man—or—that makes—or—mad heads." And this was the artist's reply: "Er—or—not all of 'em—I didn't make yours, for instance."

LOST OPPORTUNITIES.—"Now, you see," said a Texan, "land was cheap enough at one time in Texas. I've seen the day when I could have bought a square league of land, covered with fine grass and timber, for a pair of boots." "And why didn't you buy it?" asked his companion. "Didn't have the boots," said the Texan.

#### A DOL-OROUS FUN.

First Toff: "I say, old boy, what is the difference between this [doll] and that neat little creecshaw just gone by?"

Second Ditto: "Oh, because it's—"

First Ditto: "No, bai jove; one's a Dolly Var-deen, and the other's a Fardin Dolly, eh?"—fun.

#### WIDE AWAKE.

Guard: "Tickets, please!"

Rustic: "Wha—at?"

Guard: "Let me have your ticket, and look sharp!"

Rustic: "No, no; I been an' give foive bob for my ticket, an' I bean't a gawn to give un up to you. If thee wants to travel why doan't 'e buy one yourself?"

#### STRIKE AMONG SUDS.

According to a contemporary a fashion for some time prevalent amongst the industrious classes has been adopted by some of a class remarkable for industry:

WASHERWOMEN ON STRIKE.—A good deal of amusement was caused at Teignmouth on Monday by the town-crier announcing a strike of the washerwomen and laundresses, and declaring their resolution not to work for less than 1s. 6d. per day.

This strike will very likely succeed. The washerwomen of Teignmouth no doubt took good care to strike while the iron was hot.—Punch.

MATRIMONY.—A priest the other day, who was examining a confirmation class in the south of Ireland, asked the question, "What is the sacrament of matrimony?" A little girl at the head of the class

answered, "Tis a state of torment into which souls enter to prepare them for another and a better world." "Bein," said the priest, "the answer for purgatory." "Put her down," said the curate, "put her down to the fut of the class." "Leave her alone," said the priest; "for anything you or I know to the contrary, she may be perfectly right."

IMPROVING THE OCCASION.—A porter at a Galway hotel had with much trouble prevented an American's trunk from going to Belfast instead of Queenstown, and the owner rewarded him with a sovereign. The shrewd fellow held the coin rapturously in his hand a moment, and then said to the gentleman: "Haven't ye a bit o' shiver about ye? Ye wouldn't have me spindin' the likes o' this bayntiful goud to drink yer health wid? Give me a shillin', yer honour, and I'll keep this to remember ye by."

IN ARMS.—A deputation from Richmond has been waiting on the Secretary-at-War to object to that delightful suburb being made a military station. One of the speakers is reported to have said that "the fact that many boarding-schools for young ladies were in Richmond was a strong argument in favour of the views of the deputation." Perhaps if the young ladies themselves could have had a few minutes' conversation with Mr. Cardwell their view on the military question might not have been found in exact accordance with those of the deputation.—*Punch*.

WONDERS WILL NEVER CEASE.—The mutilated statue of Leicester Square disappeared the other day. On asking what had become of it we received the astounding intelligence that the equestrian figure so long immovable had "gone at last, and had fetched sixteen pounds!" It is probable that having fetched this sum he will be spending it foolishly about town. Remembering the awful Commandments in "Don Giovanni," it would not surprise us to read of the appearance of this unhappy cripple in one of the police courts, either for disorderly conduct on the Derby Day, or for reckless riding in Botten Row.—*Punch*.

TOO MUCH FOR HIM.—Little Jennie is a four-year-old, and with a decided repugnance to keeping still or acting "proper" on all occasions. Her mamma was about paying a visit to an absent sister, and intended Miss Jennie to accompany her. So she says, "Now, Jennie, when we get to Aunt Clara's I want you to be a good little girl, and not act so rudely as you do at home." "Ma," says Jennie, in sober earnest, "how long are you going to stay at aunt's?" "About a week, I think," said her mother. "Well," says Miss Jennie, very decidedly, "if I have got to behave myself a whole week I shan't go."

THE LIBERTY OF THE LETTER-BOX.—An English man's house in his castle, is it? But how about his letter-box? A castle calls one back to the fine old feudal times. Now, imagine Baron Frout de Bous posterised by prospectuses! Conceive the "King Maker" at home, and bothered by cheap circulars! How would the temper of those Britons have borne the daily, well-night hourly, bombardment of their doors to which we Englishmen who live in our own castles are now subject? Invest a shilling in a bank, or any other public company, and straightway you are pounced on as a sheep that's fit for fleecing. Prospectuses of railways to the Pole, and mines to the Antipodes, and tunnels to America, and telegraphs to the moon, are showered down upon you by every passing postman, and your life is made a burden by the banging of your door-knocker. Then come the tradesmen's circulars, the puffs of Begum Pickles, and Wagga Wagga Waistcoats, and Reversible Shirts and Envelopes. Then, too, come the notices of pretended sellings off of swindling bankrupts' stock, whereat what is chiefly sold is usually the purchaser. And then in shoals innumerable come the charity appeals, and the parsons' begging-letters, which you are kindly to return if you cannot even spare so trifling a donation as a shilling-worth of stamps. That this is a free country one clearly cannot doubt while people are permitted to make free in this manner with other people's property; for, after all, a letter-box is surely the property of the person who puts it on his door, although any other persons seem to think themselves at liberty to do anything they please with it.—*Punch*.

#### PEASANT FROM JOHNNY.

Tickle Tickle House, Jan. 23, 1872.  
dear Ma, I wright to tell you i am very retched and my chillyblains is worser again, i have not made any progress and don't think I shall. i am sorry to be such expense but i do not think schoule be off any good. One of the fellows has taken the crowns hout off my new hat for a target. i said you would not like it. he has also borrow my watch to make a water wheel with the works but it won't act. me and him have tried to put the works back but we think there is some wheels missing as it won't fit. I hope Matilda's cold is better. i am glad she is not at schule. i think i have got consumption, the boys at this place are not gentlemanly but i suppose you

did not know that when you sent me. i will try not to get bad habits. the trowsers have wore out at the nees, i think the tailor must have cheated you. the buttons have also come off and they are tore at the back. I don't think the food is good but i should not mind if i was stronger. the piece i send you is off the beef we had on sunday but on other days it is more stringy. there are black beedles in the kitchen and sometimes they cook them in the dinner which can't be wholesome when you are not strong. 1 off the boys has tamed one not a cooked a raw one and it will dance when you whistle "Down in a coal mine" which make him think of his happy home. dear Ma, i hope you and my dear papa and sisters are enjoying of yourselves and do not mind me being so uncomfortable because i do not think i shall last long.

I am  
Yours Affectionate

JOHNNY.

P.S.—Please send me some more money as i owe 8 pence. if you can not spare it i think I can borrow of a boy who is going to leave at the half-quarter and then he won't ask for it back but praps you would not like me to be under a obligashun as is parents are traidspople and i think you desel at their ship. i did not mention it as i desay they have put in your bill.

#### THE OLD SWEET DREAM.

WHAT dimpling smiles and happy tones  
The rippling waters took  
As they loomed around the stepping-stones  
That crossed the little brook!  
Still, in my dreamful reverie lost,  
The boulders smooth I see,  
This dark, that gray, that greenly mossed,  
All swept by the waters free.  
And there where we paused in the maple's shade,  
Above the glassy pool,  
Where the rushing ripples sank and made  
A mirror bright and cool;  
Again in its depths I seem to look,  
And see her gentle face,  
And her form, as she stood by the running brook,  
With its soft and girlish grace.  
Again her voice, o'er the brook's rude tones,  
In my ear sounds clear and sweet,  
Again o'er the dripping stepping-stones  
I guide her timid feet;  
Again her little hand to my own  
Clinging with a pleasing fear,  
As I lift her over the last broad stone  
To the green bank rising near.  
But, all I since then, like a doubtful dream,  
Hath passed full many a year,  
And the vision of love by the running stream  
Is dimmed by the gathering tear;  
For long hath the dear, loved voice been still,  
The little hand long cold,  
And, laid to rest in a grave on the hill,  
The form of the loved of old.  
But not all dark is the old sweet dream;  
For the brook of the past so gray  
May be but a type of the broader stream  
Which we all must cross some day;  
And the coming years be my stepping-stones  
To that better and brighter shore  
To whose peace and rest with the good and blest  
Her spirit hath crossed before.

N. D. U.

#### GEMS.

A NOBLE heart, like the sun, shows its greatest countenance in its lowest estate.

THE certain way to be cheated is to fancy one's self more cunning than others.

IT is of no advantage to have a lively mind if we are not just. The perfection of the pendulum is not to go fast, but to be regular.

TRUE friendship is a plant of slow growth, and must undergo and withstand the shocks of adversity before it is entitled to the appellation.

IT is a short step from modesty to humility, but a shorter one from vanity to folly and from weakness to falsehood.

NONE ever have been so good and so great or have raised themselves so high as to be above the reach of troubles.

WE should give as we receive, cheerfully, quickly, and without hesitation, for there is no grace in a benefit that sticks to the fingers.

NEW COMPOSING MACHINE.—A Russian printer has invented a type-setting machine which, say the St. Petersburg papers, far surpasses all similar machines that have hitherto been produced. It sets

in an hour thirty thousand letters; it costs five thousand roubles, and one thousand letters set thereby cost only five cents.

#### HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

THE WORTHLESSNESS OF BEEF-TEA.—The experiments of Gustav Bunge lead him to conclude that the common opinion that beef-tea and extract of meat are as valuable articles of diet as tea, coffee, or alcohol, is totally unfounded; that the refreshment they give is only due to their warmth and pleasant taste; and that their chief value is that they enable a person to take with appetite a larger amount of dry or tasteless food than he could otherwise do. The statements of Liebig that the addition of some meat-extract to vegetable food increases its nutritive value, and that the extractive matters of meat, and especially creatine and creatinine, are the materials for muscular work, have been disproved by Voit and Meissner; and the idea that beef-tea or meat-extract is beneficial on account of the salts they contain is an unlikely one, as these salts are already present in excess in ordinary food.—*British Medical Journal*.

#### STATISTICS.

HOUSE DUTY.—The inhabited house duty, on which the Budget gives some relief by extending an exception, is a tax which becomes year by year more productive as our houses increase both in number and value. In the financial year 1859-60 it was charged on 204,705 houses occupied for purposes of trade, or as farm-houses, at 6d. in the pound, and on 327,878 other houses at 9d., the tax applying to houses of the value of 20s. a year and upwards; in the year 1869-70 it was charged on 267,481 houses at 6d., and on 486,246 houses at 9d. In the year 1859-60 the tax produced 796,880, net—viz., 744,771*l.* in England, and 52,109*l.* in Scotland; 10 years later the produce exceeded 1,100,000*l.* It will be remembered that the house duty was substituted for the widow tax in 1851, and, like other assessed taxes, imposed only on Great Britain. The change gave to the taxpayer a relief equal to about a million sterling. Since 1851 the produce of the tax has increased more than 50 per cent.—viz., from 727,000*l.* to 1,100,000*l.* The net product in the year 1870-71 was 1,129,125*l.*—viz., 1,053,549*l.* in England, and 7,582*l.* in Scotland. It is now nearly two centuries since, in 1696, the tax on inhabited houses was first imposed in this country, in conjunction with the widow tax; but the house tax was repealed in 1834, and not levied again until 1851.

#### MISCELLANEOUS.

THE Duke of Edinburgh has become a member of the Fishmongers' Company.

The Queen has conferred upon the Empress of Germany the first-class of the order of Victoria and Albert.

DURING a thunderstorm the parish church of Beeston St. Mary's, Norfolk, was set on fire by lightning and destroyed. It was a fine specimen of the fourteenth-century work.

OLD woodmen say the forthcoming summer will be dry, for the oak is in leaf long before the ash. One who has worked in the wood thirty years says he never knew this sign to fail.

Two state coaches, late the property of the Emperor Napoleon, have been bought by a bus proprietor at Sheffield, who intends to hire them out for weddings.

THE Times records the death of Mr. George Robert Gray, Assistant-Keeper of the Zoological Department in the British Museum, and the oldest and perhaps the most skilled representative of the science of ornithology in England.

IT may be laid down as a general principle that a larger proportion of white flowers are fragrant than those of any other colour; yellow come next, then red, and lastly blue; after which, and in the same order, may be reckoned violet, green, orange, brown, and black.

PORK DISEASE.—I am a believer in the profound wisdom which dictated the old Jewish laws and rules; one of these is the disease of pig meat. The same regulation prevails in many countries, and I have read the assertion that in non-pork-eating lands the disease we call consumption is absolutely unknown! Many medical men object to its use in common; some say that well-cured bacon toasted hanging before the fire may be eaten by delicate people, but not any other description of the animal's flesh. If all pigs were well fed and healthy there would be but little objection, perhaps, to our using them for food, but there is no animal more liable to disease, and no meat in which such state of disease can be so easily disguised and concealed from the consumer.—A.

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## NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

A BRUNETTE OF TWENTY.—We have allowed your appeal to stand as it was written, albeit you have applied to a lady an epithet belonging to the masculine gender only. Perhaps in these latter days, when the line of demarcation between the occupation of the sexes is wisely as some say becoming fainter and fainter, the grammatical solecism will pass unnoticed.

CONSTANT SUBSCRIBER.—We are unable to furnish you with any information concerning "Clairvoyance," and can hardly understand your desire to become entangled in expensive experiments of the illusion attending which you seem to be fully aware. Curiosity sometimes leads folks into awkward predicaments, witness the newspaper accounts of the scrapes simple lasses have fallen into by seriously heeding the fulsome talk of pretended "fortune tellers."

GHOUL-ISH should remember that in this age deep potations are out of fashion, and that therefore his spacious capacity in this respect is likely to prove disadvantageous to a man anxious to go sweethearing. "Toprai," the friend of "Grog-tub," cannot wonder if he should be similarly disqualifed; not merely because, wrongly perhaps, a man is rated according to the company in which he may happen to be found, but more rationally on account of the maxim "Evil communications corrupt good manners."

EDWARD.—The statement you refer to is correct and requires a literal and not a jocular interpretation. The process of "marrying ale" is well understood by brewers of the old school. It was employed to increase not merely the strength of the beverage but also its mellowness and the fulness of its flavour. The process was accomplished by tapping a hogshead of ale in the middle, then by drawing as low as the tap and filling up the cask with another brewing of wort. The season for "marrying ale" is October.

LITTLE SUG.—Cubddee is the name of a game prevalent amongst the children of Persia and other Eastern nations. When it is played one individual takes his left foot in his right hand, and hopping about on one leg endeavours to overset his adversary, who advances towards him in a similar manner. English boys have a game of something of the same description—the difference being that, although they hop on one leg, both their arms are intertwined or folded to give power to the shoulder, which they force against their adversary after the fashion of a "butt" given by a horned animal.

MAUD MARY VIVIAN.—Marble can be nicely cleaned by a solution of salts of tartar and warm water. The quantities are a teaspoonful of the salts to half a gallon of water. A mixture of glycerine and lemon juice is good for the hands. Mix at discretion. The growth of the hair is in some measure dependent upon the free action of the skin, which should be promoted by exercise. You write carelessly. As to the fashion in which you should wear your hair, you should consult your acquaintances, because in such a matter regard must be had to the style of your face and features and to your position in life.

HOTSPUR.—A respectable mechanic at the age of twenty can scarcely be out of his apprenticeship. It is probable that another year must elapse before the time during which he has undertaken to serve expires. Further, it is probable that the apprenticeship indenture contains a clause by which he covenants not to contract marriage within the specified time. Possibly these considerations and stipulations may be disregarded without evoking the enforcement of legal penalties from any one, although you cannot make sure of this; but even then it will be remarkably awkward to commence married life under the stigma of a "broken bond." Your sweetheart in such an event might well ask herself, "If he has lightly treated one solemn engagement what trust can I place in him?"

JASPER Z.—The husband certainly cannot marry again, because although he does not get all the information he desires he has very fair evidence that his wife is alive. Neither does it appear that he has any grounds upon which to institute a suit for divorce, unless he be a domiciled Scotchman who is able by the laws of his country to obtain a divorce by reason of wilful desertion for a specified space of time. In the case you put the remedy seems to be a suit for the restitution of conjugal rights, which for many reasons is generally an awkward and expensive business. 2. The Civil Service Commissioners often advertise for writers for the Government Offices. This employment might suit your friend. The question of age is an open one and efficiency in penmanship and orthography almost the only test.

A CONSTANT READER (Peckham).—The word "glamour" may be derived from the Anglo-Saxon verb *ge-hlōwan*, which signifies "to shine upon unsteadily." Other

etymologists point to the *glamer* beads of Lothian, amber beads much worn by witches, and to the island dialects in which are found the word *glambr*, meaning splendour, and *glam-egn*, meaning wall-eyed. "Glamour" is absent from the editions of Dr. Johnson's dictionary published in his lifetime. The introduction of the word into England is usually accredited to Sir Walter Scott. It occurs for example in Stanza 9 of Canto 3 of the "Lay of the Last Minstrel," to save you trouble we transcribe a few of the lines which will help you to arrive at the meaning of the word:—

"A moment then the volume spread,  
And one short spell thereto read,  
It had much of *glamour* might,  
Could make a lady seem a knight;  
The cobwebs on a dungeon wall  
Seem tapestry in lordly hall;  
A nutshell seem a gilded barge."

And so forth. A note to Scott's poem gives the interpretation of the word under discussion as "magical delusion." This brings us to the general opinion of the meaning of the word, which seems to be that it is a term representing a popular superstition, common in old times among the people of Oriental countries as well as the people of Scotland, by which was understood a "magical mist," supposed to be raised by the witches which deluded the spectators with visions of things that had no real existence, and produced other effects equally wonderful. From this attempt to answer your question we think you will see the exceeding appropriateness of the word as applied to the case in question.

## THE OLD BEAU.

Well, I'll tell you the reason I am an old beau,  
'Tis because that I like young society so;  
And how could I now with the young people go  
If I had not become such a charming old beau?  
For I never was much of a scholar, you see—  
Was not learned or wise; never took a degree.  
'Tis all very well for some persons, we know;  
But, for me, I preferred just the life of a beau.  
I may say all I had was my beauty and graces;  
While I flattered myself that the former can trace,  
The cognomen given the latter will show.  
For acquaintances all dubbed me Apollo le Beau!  
I forgot; my friends said that I had something  
more;  
Twas a heart! Well, I always was kindly, I'm  
There's one thing, however, the women all know,  
That the worst kind of men cannot make a good  
beau.

Ah, how could I resign all those glorious days,  
And jog-trot along o'er the common highways  
With every old codger who happened—Oh, no!  
So I changed from a young to a gallant old beau.  
Something else helped to make the old beau, I  
could name,  
But I'm sure that the story to you would be  
tame.  
Some trouble I've had, boys—but, pshaw! let it  
go;  
No trouble must darken the eyes of a beau!

Poor Thackery said, with a sigh of despair,  
He remembered the time when his thick tangled  
hair  
His nurse could scarce comb, I remember it too,  
But the time is long past—I'm a happy old beau.  
It is true I've recourse to a little "fine art."  
Just to cover defects, and to play well my part;  
No, boys, do not laugh—it seems not long ago  
When the girls all exclaimed, "What an exquisite  
beau!"

If I did not use art, what a fright I should be!  
Without teeth, without legs, or a hair you could  
see;  
No shoulders, no sides—how I'd feel, mean and  
sow!  
So I just must remain, as before, an old beau:  
G. H. H.

RUTH, twenty-four, tall, dark hair, fair complexion, good looking, domesticated, and loving. Respondent must be industrious and kind.

DARK-EYED ANNE, nineteen, pretty, and very fond of children. Respondent must be about twenty-two, tall, and a musician.

EDWARD S., thirty, 5ft. 9in., a tradesman, and able to keep a wife comfortably, wishes to marry a tall, amiable young lady.

ARTHUR JAMES F., twenty-six, 5ft. 5in., fair, and in a lucrative situation, is desirous of marrying a fair and domesticated young lady.

M. W., thirty-three, medium height, good tempered, and a widower. Respondent must be about thirty, and fond of children.

SARAH ANN O., twenty-five, rather tall, stout, and a very good figure, wants to marry a tall, dark gentleman, about thirty.

HENRY H., twenty-three, 5ft. 10in., handsome, and in a good situation. Respondent must be about nineteen, and domesticated.

V. M., twenty-six, an officer in the Army, and in receipt of a good income. Respondent must be about twenty, and pretty.

K. D., thirty-three, accomplished, a widow, in possession of a little money. Respondent must be tall, fair, and fond of music.

HILDA Q., twenty, medium height, dark hair, and accomplished, wishes to marry a good-looking gentleman about twenty-five.

MIDNIGHT WATCH, twenty-five, tall, and in a good position in the Navy. Respondent must be tall, amiable, and domesticated.

L. M., nineteen, fond of children, pretty, and the only

daughter of a tradesman. Respondent must be not more than twenty-five, a good musician, and able to make a wife comfortable.

GROSGE F., twenty-one, good looking, well educated, and the eldest son of a very prosperous miller. Respondent must be about nineteen, tall, pretty, and have a little money.

MABEL L., eighteen, medium height, of a merry disposition, fair complexion, and good looking. Respondent must be a tall, dark gentleman, a tradesman, and musical.

Rosa H., nineteen, medium height, dark hair and eyes, loving, affectionate, and domesticated. Respondent must be a fair young man, good tempered, steady, loving, and fond of home.

MARY S. would like to marry a tall, fair young man; she is twenty-five, medium height, domesticated, has a dark complexion, dark hair and eyes, and would make a good wife to a suitable person.

LOVELY BLANCHE, twenty, rather tall, fond of music and children, and accomplished. Respondent must be a military gentleman, about twenty-five, handsome, and have a good income.

H. C., twenty-three, a domestic servant, fond of home and children, loving, and has a little money. Respondent must be not more than twenty-eight, and tall; a tradesman preferred.

M. E., twenty-nine, dark complexion, gray eyes, black hair, would like to marry a steady mechanic. "M. E." would make home all that it should be to a good husband of a loving disposition.

MARY V., nineteen, tall, brown hair, dark eyes, pretty, well educated, and would make a loving wife. Respondent must be about twenty-five, tall, and handsome; a shopkeeper preferred.

L. W., twenty-three, tall, dark hair, blue eyes, loving, domesticated, and fond of home and children. Respondent must be steady, industrious, and able to keep a wife comfortably.

HANNAH C., thirty, tall, dark, blue eyes, loving, and a domestic servant, wishes to marry a tall, dark gentleman, who must be good looking, about thirty-two, and able to make a wife happy.

ANNE S., twenty, medium height, brown hair and eyes, very good tempered, a tradesman's daughter, and would make a good wife, would like to marry a young man about twenty-five, who can sing, and be a loving and faithful husband.

ARTHUR W., twenty-two, medium height, moderately dark, fond of music, and in receipt of a good income. Respondent must be twenty, rather tall, and have a taste for music and drawing; a lady in receipt of a good income preferred.

## COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

CRAYEN is responded to by—"Artress," who thinks she would suit him.

ROBERT D. by—"Kate K.," twenty, accomplished, and fond of children.

JOHN H. by—"C. E. M.," nineteen, pretty, and a publican's daughter.

LYDIA A. by—"M. M.," twenty-nine, tall, and in a very good situation.

RUPERT by—"Minnie," twenty, fair, and domesticated.

LILY by—"Jack Topblock," twenty-one, 5ft. 7in., good looking, and thinks he would suit "Lily."

JOH N. H. by—"A. M. De P." twenty-three, 5ft. 2in., and a brunet.

NATHAN B. (Greasbroy) by—"Lovely Lucy," twenty-one, tall, good looking, passionately fond of children, and has a little money.

LUCY H. by—"Harry R.," twenty-two, medium height, the son of a builder, fond of home, and a native of Yorkshire.

EDWARD B. by—"Clara M." twenty, rather dark, handsome, accomplished, very fond of home and children, and loving.

WALTER by—"Ruby," eighteen, rather tall, good looking, fair complexion, dark brown hair, and fond of music.

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